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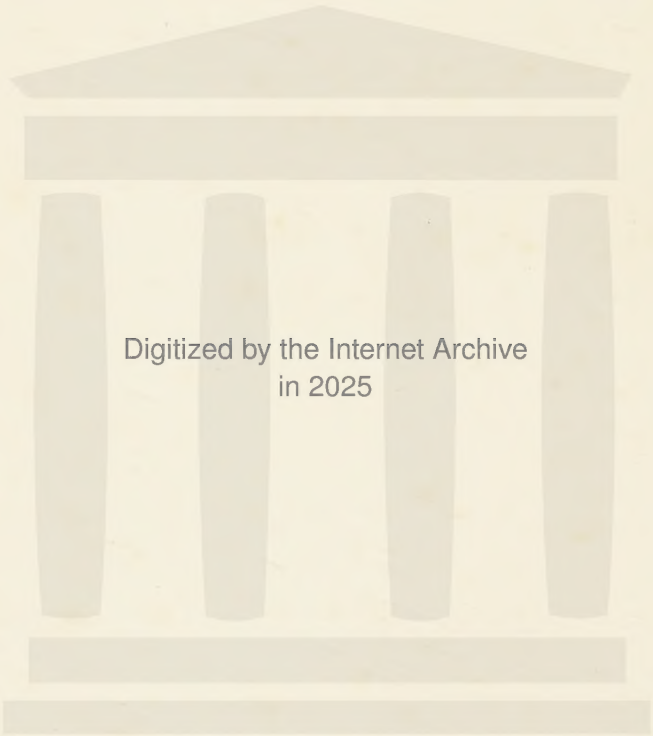

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GOD AND FREEDOM IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

CONTAINING

THE DONNELLAN LECTURES FOR THE YEAR 1913-14

DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

BY

CHARLES F. D'ARCY, D.D.
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PREFACE

PHILOSOPHY is intensely alive at the present moment. Never at any time in the history of thought were the materials so abundant, the interest so widely spread, the concentration of mind upon the noblest of themes so great. Nor can it be said that any one nation can claim pre-eminence. France, indeed, can point to the most original intellect; but none of the other great peoples is behind her in vigour of thought and patience of research.

The aim of these lectures is to show that the new investigations which the world owes in the main to M. Bergson supply the means of a further advance along the path which had been marked out by the great succession of the immortals. The Idealism which the modern world owes to Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, and T. H. Green, has been subjected to a very thoroughgoing criticism, but its fundamental principles have not been destroyed. We have learned that the closed system which it seemed to create is not the perfect thing that many of us imagined in the young enthusiasm which possessed us thirty years ago. At the feet of Lotze, Bradley, Ward, James, and others, we have learned its defects, but we have not ceased to discern its intrinsic value. And we have discovered that its failure to answer many questions is one of the best things about it.

M. Bergson is, in some respects, the greatest and most penetrating critic of Idealism. But for that very reason he is the most valuable. He has taught us to think of philosophy as, like other branches of know-

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ledge, a study with a great future before it, not a system created by one great mind and to be taken or left, as it stands, by all who come after.

Every philosophy is implicitly a theology, positive or negative; and theology is always the interpretation of religion in the terms of some philosophy. To think about theology is to philosophize. Things would go better than they do if some of our theologians realized this more perfectly.

It is the conviction of the writer that we are on the eve of a new statement in theology, with the help of that transfiguration of Idealism which, he believes, will take place when the principles set free by M. Bergson have had their due influence upon philosophic thought. These lectures are a humble endeavour to express this conviction and to show how it is reached. The ideas which they contain were to some degree foreshadowed, seventeen years ago, in a former series of Donnellan Lectures, delivered by the writer and published under the name of *Idealism and Theology*.

How dare a man enjoy the sweet and secret blisses of philosophy while this most hideous of wars is rending the fairest garments of our civilization, and strewing earth and ocean with the bodies of our sons and daughters! Yet it is a good thing to be reminded that, in every soul, there is a sanctuary where something of peace can be maintained even in the most awful conflict. How else could man live through such a time?

The lectures were delivered before the war broke out, but in preparing them for the press the writer found that his subject involved the treatment of themes which acquired a new and poignant interest from the events which were taking place as he wrote.

August, 1915.

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GOD AND FREEDOM IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE in the widest sense is the sum total of all that human beings have apprehended, and continue to apprehend, by means of all their faculties. It is gained by them by all their senses, by their intellectual powers, and by their active energies of body and mind. While thus various in the ways by which it is apprehended, it is yet always presented as a unity. The colours and forms which come to us by the eye, the sounds which gain access by the ear, the resistances, odours, tastes, which are known through muscular effort, touch, and the organs of smell and of taste, the sensations of heat and cold, the feelings of pleasure and pain, the thoughts which we have about all these things, our perceptions of the material world, our enjoyment of beauty, and of the meanings that we discern in the world of men and things, our social relationships, our affections, our hopes, our fears, our memories and anticipations, our beliefs and disbeliefs: all these, somehow or other, unite to form a whole which we call our experience.

Further, all partial human experiences unite in a universal human experience which grows from age to

age, linking together all individuals, all generations, all races and communities, all events of which mankind has ever been aware, all creeds, policies, undertakings, sufferings, and attainments.

Experience is the widest, the most comprehensive, term expressive of all human things, and of the unity which enables us to think or speak of them as human.

In this widest unity there is, however, a more limited unity which is characteristic of the human individual. Every mind which is able to enter into the universal experience has its own point of view. For it, all human experience, so far as it is grasped at all, is involved in a stream of apprehensions which are its own. My experience is, no doubt, an element in the universal experience, but the universal experience can only be shared by me in so far as it enters into the stream of my experience. My experience includes all that I sense, feel, think, know, remember, anticipate, hope, fear, enjoy, do.

When I consider Experience, and try to understand it, I must begin with my experience and endeavour to detect its conditions, its meaning, its implications. This is, in the main, the task which philosophy has set itself. The famous question, How is experience possible? still stands as the most important expression of the central problem of philosophy. Yet this question is not concerned only with the experience of the individual. Beginning inevitably from that starting-point, it must also take account of the wider experience of the human race, and endeavour to bring all within the scope of its purview.

It is a very difficult thing to grasp even the experience of the individual as a whole. The effort to do so leaves the mind baffled and perplexed. The

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reason is that the ordinary processes of knowledge have not supplied the necessary training. When I set to work to learn any special science—botany, for example—I select a portion of my experience and immediately begin to break it up. I proceed by continual division and distinction. Here are two ferns. My teacher tells me they are different species. To my uneducated eye they look the same. But as I examine them I begin to perceive minute points in which they differ: the forms of the pinnæ, the colour of the scales, the grouping of the spore-cases. After a time, as my eye becomes more educated, I grasp these distinctions in a moment, and can tell each species at a glance. Then I become so bold that I say I know these ferns. As my study goes on and I get, in the same way, to know many other species, I begin to understand why it is that they are grouped together as forming distinct genera. But in all this grasping of facts, my method is abstraction—that is, the marking off of certain selected portions of the things that come under my observation and neglecting the rest. What I attend to is a very small part indeed of the whole. And this process of abstraction is employed in all my ordinary efforts to grasp and understand the world of things which is presented to me. When I form a general notion, I do so by dropping out of consideration nearly all the characteristics of the things I examine. If I desire to teach a child the nature of a circle, I point to the top of my inkpot, or the button of my coat, but in my explanation I must omit all that makes the inkpot to be an inkpot and all that makes a button to be a button. The concrete things which yield the abstract idea are indefinitely more than the idea I gather from them.

Similarly, in arriving at a law of Nature, the man

of science must attend only to certain selected attributes of the things which that law affects. No law can take account of the whole being of a physical thing. Again, the artist can never hope to represent upon his canvas the infinite complexity of the landscape which his eyes behold. A great part of his skill is exercised upon the delicate task of omission. He produces his wonderful result by seizing the characteristic lines and colours, and so reproducing them, in relation to one another, that the total effect creates the impression of the natural scene.

There is clearly a correspondence between this universal method of selection or abstraction and the nature of that faculty of attention which is the mind's way of grasping all that it knows. When I attend to a thing I exercise a power which enables me to select it for observation out of an indefinite number of other things upon which I could have directed my mind. So selected, it stands out vividly against a hazy background of which I am vaguely conscious. It is like one of those portraits which are shown up against a field of faintly varied colour which may represent clouds, or curtains, or indefinite distance, for all the spectator can tell. Yet the background of attention differs from that of the portrait in this respect, that I can at will change the focus of my attention and call up out of the haze any other of the many objects which are there. But when I do so, the first object slips back into the haze more or less completely, in accordance with my purpose at the moment.

The method of selection or abstraction is, then, a natural and inevitable outcome of the nature of my knowing faculties. Only thus could man, being what he is, gain knowledge of the world about him.

How then can experience as a whole be grasped? It seems to be certain that, as a concrete whole, it is quite beyond our apprehension. All we can do is to grasp it piecemeal and judge of it as a whole from the nature of the parts as we grasp them, and from the nature of the relations in which they stand to each other.

Yet surely it is clear that this process may be very misleading. How can a method which always omits more of present fact than it grasps attain to a real comprehension of the whole? Our faculty of attention is clearly uncertain in its operation, varying continually in the degree of its concentration and in its power of apprehension. We are always dimly conscious of a great deal more than we succeed in grasping distinctly. There are undercurrents of feeling and of thought which continue unchecked while we are busily engaged upon things which seem to occupy all our attention. Our senses receive far more of the external world than we are capable of attending to. Colours, sounds, scents, etc., come to us in infinite variety. They somehow enter our experience with a fulness which far surpasses our clear consciousness of them. So it is that we can turn back upon an experience which is just past and call up from it particulars which had escaped at the moment. A sentence spoken to a man who is absorbed in some occupation fails to carry its meaning to him, but the sound of the voice recalls him, and turning back upon it in memory he finds the words and the meaning he had missed. In certain abnormal states of mind scenes and sounds come back with a wealth of detail which was not made clear when the actual experience took place.

The phenomena of subconsciousness, which have

been so much considered in recent years, form the clearest and fullest proof that the whole of experience is not included in that succession of distinct apprehensions which we gain by the efforts of concentrated attention. From those undercurrents of thought and feeling of which we become aware when the strain of attention is relaxed to those deeper elements which are revealed by experiment upon hypnotized subjects, and which, in normal cases, never seem to come to the surface, there is an immense volume of contents in our experience which is not revealed by superficial examination.

We are apt to think of our conscious experience as consisting of a multitude of separate sensations and ideas connected together. We have seen how this impression is created. It is due to the efforts of concentrated attention by which certain parts of our total experience are isolated and considered separately. And it has been confirmed by the language and modes of thought of many philosophers. Locke, for example, based his whole system on his doctrine of Ideas. These ideas are, he says, "The immediate objects of our minds in thinking." Starting from this mode of describing the elements of our conscious experience, Locke proceeded to a careful analysis of the contents of our consciousness. There can be no doubt of the importance of this "new way of ideas," as Locke's most distinguished critic in his own day called it. It was the introduction to all modern psychology and metaphysics. Yet out of it grew a view of the nature of experience which is certainly false. The ideas, whether of sensation or reflection, to use Locke's own distinction, came to be regarded as distinct and separate existences present in the mind

and entering into relationship with one another in an external manner, as books are associated on the shelf of a library, or as beads are strung together into a necklace or rosary.

As against such a view as this modern psychology has exhibited the continuity of consciousness. Our conscious experience is not a collection of separate elements. It is a stream, or *continuum*. The distinct "ideas" of which we are aware when, by an effort of attention, we grasp them, are but points of brighter illumination. They are sunlit mountain-peaks rising out of a cloud-covered country.

Imagery of this kind helps to make clear the fact that the "ideas" are parts of a continuous whole, not isolated and self-sufficing units. Yet it must be used with caution. The image of the stream is misleading, because it suggests a succession of elements related to one another by mechanical juxtaposition and moving past a fixed point. We shall see that this conception is a peculiarly dangerous one. The image of the sunlit mountain-peaks is misleading, because it omits the life and movement which are essential characteristics of human experience. But the most serious vice of all such illustrations is that they translate the psychical into the language of the physical, and thus give it a factitious clearness which it does not possess. In the effort to make psychology bright and interesting, by describing its facts in pictorial language, psychologists have made themselves responsible for endless misunderstanding. When the consciousness of the individual is described as the illuminated portion of a great ocean of psychical fact, or when the "threshold" of consciousness is spoken of, the relation of the subconscious to the conscious seems to become exceedingly

clear. This clearness is, however, entirely due to the fact that the psychical elements are represented as things in space side by side with one another. But feelings, thoughts, and wishes are not to be reasoned about as if they were material things. Their nature is quite different. Instead of making psychology easy by applying to it the images and conceptions which belong to the material world, we are really introducing a fatal confusion. If we desire to get at the truth, we must make a very resolute effort to free our minds from the illusions created by the tendency to use the language of physics. We must consider those characteristics which are peculiar to the psychical world, and distinguish it from the physical. When, therefore, we allow ourselves to speak of the stream of consciousness, we do well to remind ourselves that it is not a stream in the physical sense of the term. What we are endeavouring to express is the fact that the elements of which we are conscious are not rigid, self-sufficing mutually exclusive things, but that they form together a continuous, ever-flowing experience.

At this point we find ourselves presented with a difficulty of a very fundamental kind. When the thoughtful man begins to look into his experience as a whole and endeavour to grasp its nature, he finds himself in two worlds at the same time. His body dwells in the external world of material things : the world which his hands handle and his eyes behold. And of this world he knows that he can truly say that he lives in it and belongs to it. To common sense it is the most real of all things.

On the other hand, when he looks within, he finds himself in a world of a very different kind. Here are feelings, thoughts, memories, wishes, determinations,

hopes, fears. These are not material things. The recollection of the touch of a vanished hand, or of the sound of a voice that is stilled, is clearly a wholly different thing from the hand or the voice itself. It belongs to another order, to the inner world as contrasted with the outer.

At first view this inner world seems a very insubstantial thing as compared with the outer. The forms of existence which belong to it are fleeting, evanescent. They come and go. They are clear or vague. They are like dissolving views, which flash out distinctly, then become blurred, and suddenly vanish, to give place to something else. The things of the external world are always "there." The things of the inner world become more and more difficult to grasp and to define the more they are examined. It is impossible to fix them. They elude our pursuit. We follow them in thought, and in the moment when we seem about to seize them they disappear or are transformed into something else. It is no wonder, therefore, that the inner world should seem unreal, phantasmal, when compared with the outer. In the latter, the eyes and ears and hands of men work with certainty and precision. In the former, eyes and ears and hands are useless. We are dependent upon some inner mode of apprehension which is as difficult to grasp as the things with which it deals. Here it may be truly said that the less we think about our faculties the better they work ; while, in the external world, the exact opposite is the rule.

Thus, the distinction between the inner and the outer seems to be absolutely clear. Yet the progress of thought has revealed a deeper analysis. Is the external world as distinct from the inner as it seems to

common sense? When we examine, to the best of our ability, the ways in which we grasp material things, we find reasons for doubt. Here is a rose. It has colour, scent, form, beauty. I grasp the colour by my sense of sight, the scent by my sense of smell. But what is colour? Is it in the rose or in my seeing of the rose? Does it not seem that if all eyes were destroyed there would be no more colour in the rose or anywhere else? What is the perfume? Here, even more clearly, it appears that apart from the existence of creatures able to smell there would be no perfume. These things—colour and perfume—are surely sensations, and can exist only in a being capable of sensations. They are in me rather than in the rose. But the form, it will be said, is in the rose. It is manifest to two senses—to sight and touch. And there are other qualities which seem to be in the thing and not in the perceiving of the thing—hardness and impenetrability, for example. Qualities of this kind Locke called primary, and regarded them as really belonging to the thing itself apart from the perception of it. But further examination has shown that these primary qualities are all constituted by relations. The form of a rose-leaf is essentially the group of relations among the points which define the shape of the leaf. The hardness of a thing is a relation between that thing and my hand or some other thing which may be pushed against it. But relation is, as Locke admitted, essentially mental.

Further, we ask, What is the beauty of the rose? Is it in the rose itself, or is it in the mind which perceives the rose? It is surely quite clear that beauty has no existence apart from a scale of values which is not material but spiritual. Beauty is classed among what are now often called the Tertiary qualities of things.

Of them it is quite clear that they belong to the inner world of mind rather than to the outer world of matter.

It is also interesting to consider how this thing which I perceive, the rose, gets the high degree of unity which belongs to it. How are the form, colour, texture, scent, beauty, put together so as to form, or belong to, one thing, the rose? I see the form, colour, and texture with my eyes, I feel the form and texture with my sense of touch, I apprehend the scent by means of my sense of smell, I discern the beauty by the instinctive application of a scale of spiritual values of which I am somehow aware. But how are all these elements united as the attributes of one thing within my knowledge? It may be said that this unification takes place because the rose, a thing of a certain form and colour, occupies a definite position in space and in relation to other objects in space, and all the attributes are referred to this same position. No one will deny this. Spatial things must be defined in relation to one another. But how is the space known through the eye identified with the space known by means of the hand and with the space through which the perfume of the rose is carried to me by the breeze? There is nothing in the rose which can co-ordinate all these elements. The co-ordinating principle can only be found in the self which apprehends all and unites these manifold experiences in one experience, the rose.

These are the familiar arguments upon which Idealism bases its proof that the world of material things is really constituted by the knowing mind in its activity of perception. We are not now concerned with the sufficiency of this proof. Our present purpose is merely to show that the hard-and-fast line which we draw between the inner world of feelings, thoughts,

wishes, etc., and the outer world of material things, is illusory. When we examine the outer world from the point of view of our apprehension of it—we are not now inquiring into its real nature, or its nature apart from our knowing—we find that every element of it, as we grasp it, is also an element in that stream of conscious experience which we have been considering. All that we apprehend of the outer world belongs to, and is part of, the *continuum* of our mental life.

The distinction between the outer and the inner seems to be most accurately defined in the following way : Some of our apprehensions carry with them, as part of themselves, the apprehension of space, others do not. Those which involve space, or spatial relations, belong to the outer world : those which do not involve spatial relations belong to the inner world. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to express it thus : Those apprehensions which must be referred to a definite position in space belong to the outer world ; those which are not so referred, to the inner. The memory of a past scene involves spatial apprehension, but it is not, here and now, referred to a definite position in space. Hence we think of it as belonging to the inner world.

From all this it follows that the whole of our experience, including all that we apprehend of the outer world, as well as the inner world of thoughts, feelings, wishes, etc., constitutes a continuous mental life, conscious, subconscious, and perhaps superconscious.

It is a commonplace of popular thought all the world over that metaphysical study is a delusive and utterly hopeless pursuit. Some of the greatest minds, it is urged, have been grappling with the problems of metaphysics since the beginning of human thought, and have achieved nothing certain or permanent.

Witness the endless disagreements of the philosophers, and their unceasing disputes. After thousands of years of discussion we find the mind of the twentieth century, so clear in matters of science, in utter confusion on these questions. Is there a single position, it may be asked, in regard to which all schools of thought are in practical agreement? Is there a single metaphysical proposition which will be even widely assented to? Is there any ground which all modern philosophers hold in common?

With but little hesitation I venture to give an affirmative answer to these questions. Underlying all modern reasonings on metaphysics will be found the assumption that there is one fact which must be accepted as the foundation of all constructive thought —the living, moving *continuum* of experience. This we have and hold. Here is a realm which is certainly in our possession. The varying philosophies are efforts to explain and understand it. They may all be false. But the fact itself is undeniable. Here it is. If it be not real, there can be no such thing as reality. If it be an illusion, then all is illusion: there is no reality anywhere.

In a sense, this truth has always been admitted. Since Kant's time, it has been more clearly seen and more consciously regarded as the basis of metaphysical inquiry. The question, How is experience possible? is the recognized starting-point of modern philosophy. But philosophers have failed to realize the importance of the continuity of experience. Almost always they have begun their investigations by breaking it up. They have torn up the living thing and examined the fragments in the hope of finding that life which they had, with their own hands, destroyed. The result is

that metaphysics has become a wrangling about a multitude of artificially-created difficulties. The philosophers contrive snares, and are themselves caught.

We have to realize, then, that experience is a living whole : concrete, continuous, organic, and ever-changing. The word "organic" is perhaps misleading, for, as the living organism is higher in the scale of being than a lump of unorganized matter, so is the experience of a conscious person higher than a living organism. None of the descriptive terms that we apply to experience can be good enough, for all such terms are products of that abstracting process which we have considered, and that process can never grasp experience as a whole.

Here, then, is the fact from which we start : experience as a concrete whole. We possess it, we experience it ; we know, feel, desire, will it. All these modes of expression, it may be admitted, tend to break up its totality. Yet it is clear that in experience we detect all these things and much more. The point for us to realize is that all are united in our living concrete experience in a whole which is for us a certain reality. And not only is it a certain reality : it is also the fundamental given reality on which all our consideration of reality must be based. If this experience of ours be a dream, then it is the dream which makes all other dreams possible.

We have referred to the question with which modern philosophy begins : How is experience possible ? It is worth considering whether it might not be even better to begin by asking the question : Experience, as a concrete continuous reality, being given, how is anything else possible ?

Bergson, in a remarkable passage, criticizes Herbert

Spencer's method of working out a doctrine of evolution. "The usual device," he writes, "of the Spencerian method consists in reconstructing evolution with fragments of the evolved. If I paste a picture on a card and then cut up the card into bits, I can reproduce the picture by rightly grouping again the small pieces." Such is Spencer's method. "He takes reality in its present form; he breaks it to pieces; he scatters it in fragments which he throws to the winds; then he 'integrates' these fragments and 'dissipates their movement.' Having imitated the whole by a work of mosaic, he imagines he has retraced the design of it, and made the genesis." *

The profound truth of this criticism will be apparent to every student of Spencer. But precisely the same might be said of the method of most metaphysicians in their treatment of experience. Having to explain how experience is possible, they tear out of the concrete living *continuum* certain elements, and then proceed to reconstruct the whole, in all the wonder of its life and movement, by putting together these dead fragments. If they are by predilection materialists, they take our perceptions of the material world, work back from them to certain supposed elements, and then are surprised to find that the world constructed out of these elements has no place for the living perception which was the beginning of all their efforts: conscious experience has to be described as an *epiphenomenon*. Or, if idealists of a well-known school are at work, they take certain abstract ideas or concepts, and with them endeavour to reconstruct the world as known to us in experience. No wonder that the living reality

* Bergson, *Creative Evolution*. English translation by Mitchell, chap iv., p. 385.

has disappeared, and that the final result is, to repeat a historic phrase, "a ballet of bloodless categories."

It must always be true that if any one element or group of elements is taken from the whole of experience and the attempt made to build up a universe with the materials so obtained, the result is inevitably poorer, less real, than experience itself.

I have ventured to describe our conscious experience as concrete. It is necessary to point out that this term indicates the permanent and essential nature of our conscious experience. It does not mean that a number of elements have been brought together and compacted so as to form a concrete result. While it is true that experience is constantly growing by the incorporation of new elements, it is also true that, in relation to any element new or old, experience is the concrete whole. This ought to be quite clear from the mere fact that any distinct particular object of knowledge is gained by that isolating and abstracting operation of attention which has been already described. Every such object is grasped by being defined as a distinct particular thing in relation to an enveloping whole of which I am not so clearly conscious, but which is yet within my experience. I am aware of a vague something. I concentrate attention upon it. It is, for example, a tree, a Scotch fir, with its red stem and glaucous foliage, clearly visible and apprehended as what it is, in contrast to a vaguely defined whole which I call a wood, and which is itself part of a still more vaguely apprehended landscape. Only by shifting the focus of attention do I grasp the scene as a whole. Yet when so grasped a further examination will show that the whole landscape is itself involved in the vaster whole of my total experience. This is an easy illustration.

Let us take an example of a different kind. I look within, as we say, and am aware of a wish, a desire. It is an impulse towards some object or activity. If, in a practical way, I simply direct attention towards this object or activity, I gain something of the clearness of definition which belongs to the Scotch fir, though still in relation to a larger whole of experience. But if I try to define the wish as a particular element in my mental life I find myself involved in great difficulties. To make the wish stand out clearly as a distinct object for examination is impossible. Is it in itself, as an inner mental possession, a feeling or an idea or a thought? The psychologist will say it is none of these. Conation is a distinct department of the inner life. A wish is essentially an impulse towards an object or activity. But I can truly say of it, I feel a strong wish to go to such a place, or to visit such a friend. If I feel it, surely it is a feeling. Or I can rightly say, I think my wish, I reflect upon it, and therefore must regard it as a thought.

The more we try to disentangle the contents of our inner mental life, the more difficult it becomes to isolate any one element and regard it as having a separate identity of its own. This truth can be exhibited in a multitude of ways. In fact, however we approach the analysis of our mental possessions, we find ourselves confronted with the same difficulty. It is only the delusive definiteness of names and the seeming clearness of spatial illustrations which have disguised the truth and made psychical distinctions appear to be well defined and permanent.

We are accustomed, for example, to think of ourselves as possessing many distinct faculties. Psychology occupies itself a good deal with the description of these.

The three principal are said to be feeling, knowledge, will or conation. Such classification is no doubt necessary, and the form now adopted is probably the best, as it has resulted from long and patient study. Yet, when these departments of mental activity are named and described, we tend to regard them as separate agencies which are somehow tied up together. Certain old-fashioned psychologists surrendered themselves completely to this tendency, and the divisions so created cut down deep into the heart of great philosophies. But, in truth, these faculties cannot be thus separated. They are really varying aspects of an active life which is essentially one. They cannot be disentangled.

Consider those principal faculties which have just been named — feeling, knowledge, will. In every exercise of conscious activity these three are involved, and each presupposes the others. Will is always directed towards some object. Hence it must involve an idea of the object, which is an exercise of knowledge, and that idea must excite feeling or the object would not be regarded as desirable. Again, in an act of knowledge there is always attention, and attention, as is now universally admitted by psychologists, is an act of will. Also the thing attended to must, to some degree, appeal to feeling, or it could not excite attention. Further, feeling, in the form in which it enters into conscious experience, demands attention, and attention includes both knowledge and will. The truth is that the activity of the conscious subject of experience is one, and the division of this unitary activity into various faculties, however inevitable and necessary, is a dismemberment of the living reality, and, for the purposes of philosophy, perplexing and misleading.

If we turn from the activity of conscious experience to its contents in the specific sense of the term—that is, to the psychical materials with which it deals—we find an exactly similar unity of elements apparently diverse. Kant separated sensibility from understanding in a very definite way. But, as a matter of fact, they are inseparable as they occur in our conscious experience. A sensation altogether out of relation to other elements of experience would be an impossible object of consciousness. And a relation is for us, as we grasp it, essentially thought. In the unity of our mental life, all the things which we distinguish as various elements, sensations, perceptions of the external world, feelings pleasurable and painful, relations, thoughts, reflections, memories, meanings, are blended in a concrete whole, and only by a process of isolation and abstraction can any element be torn out of its context and presented to the mind as a distinct object.

These considerations lead to another. We have distinguished the activity of the mind from the contents with which that activity deals. The former we have seen to be a unitary activity, which may be analyzed into certain elements, feeling, thought, will; but which, in its living reality, is not a combination of three separable faculties, but one undivided life. The latter, the contents of the mind, we have also found to be a living concrete whole which can only be broken up into elements by a process which destroys its reality.

We must now go a step further and point out that the distinction between the mental activity and the mental contents is itself a breaking up of the one life. It is impossible to draw any definite and permanent distinction between sensing and sensation, between

feeling and felt, between thinking and thought, or even between the act of willing and the thing willed. Consider the last, as it is that which is most open to question. A watchmaker wills to make a watch. It may appear that the watch, as a permanent result in the material world, is quite distinct from his act of will. But a deeper examination will show that what he wills is, not the watch, but the making of the watch. And the making of the watch is, on its mental side, the whole mental activity of the man directed to a certain end. That end, on the material side, has indeed a permanent material result ; but that material result itself has no existence for the man except as it enters into that material order which is part of the man's experience.

Kant, indeed, distinguished the form given by the mind from the matter given to the mind. Thus, for him, space is a form of sensibility, which the mind in the act of sensing gives to the matter, the sensation, which the mind receives. But it was this very distinction which led to his doctrine of the thing-in-itself, which proved the weakest point in his system. He involved himself in difficulty just because he endeavoured to divide the living whole of experience into separate elements.

We have endeavoured to exhibit the concreteness of experience by showing that the application to it of the method of abstraction, however necessary it may be for other purposes, always involves the letting slip of the living reality. In this respect, experience is like a living organism : cut it up and the life vanishes. We cannot get at the nature of the whole by examination of any of the dismembered parts. It is clear that the word " concreteness " does not quite express this

truth. How could it, for it is a word derived from the nature of certain material things? What we have now attained is the truth that what we call our experience, the reality which our minds certify to us as the one indisputable fact, is a whole of such a kind that the effort to break it up by abstraction takes us further away from its true nature rather than nearer to it. All the parts and elements so obtained are indeed contained in it. It includes them all; yet it is, in some way, more than their combination. In its full being it is *sui generis*.

It is possible to strike out another, and, as it seems, a more brightly illuminated path towards the apprehension of this truth. The sign-post which directs us will be found in certain investigations by M. Bergson.

Things in space stand apart from one another They are mutually exclusive. Impenetrability is an essential quality of material things. "Two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time." If we try to imagine one body penetrating another, we find it necessary to suppose spaces intervening between the particles of the latter which can be occupied by the particles of the former. If a sword penetrates a human body, it must thrust aside the particles of the flesh to make a space for itself. But this characteristic does not apply to mental elements coexisting in the conscious experience. They interpenetrate one another. Those who desire to see this truth worked out at length should consult M. Bergson's *Essai sur les Données*, which has been translated under the title of *Time and Free Will*. Here it is sufficient to exhibit the fact with the help of one or two illustrations. A musical harmony is not merely a number of notes in relation to one another. It is more. In it, the

various elements of sound permeate one another so as to produce a whole which has a character of its own. A great orchestra moving in perfect time gives a result which is one, and at the same time contains within it a multitude of perfectly blended elements. They all interpenetrate, and so create a new thing.*

An illustration of another sort will, I think, make the fact clearer. The musical illustration is open to misunderstanding because the elements are all of the same kind. Recent psychology has demonstrated in a remarkable way the persistence of a definitely conceived purpose which has taken shape in an act of will. When a man has deliberately set himself in a given direction, that act of determination will, often without further conscious consideration, carry him through an immense variety of experiences not directly connected with it, and will shape his action whenever suitable circumstances arise. A simple instance of the commonest kind will explain. A man decides to walk to a certain place. He sets out on his journey with such preparations as his purpose and habits may demand. He looks at the sky, speculates as to the weather, thinks of a hundred topics which happen to interest him at the time or are suggested by things he observes, meets a friend, talks of whatever that friend's presence suggests, notices something which puzzles him, guesses at its meaning; but never for one moment does the purpose of his journey fail to guide him. Every step of the way is controlled by it. It cannot be even described as subconscious, for all the way, and in every change of experience, the man is aware of it, though he may never deliberately present it to

* Dean Ovenden, in the *Hibbert Journal* of April, 1912, gave some fine illustrations of this from the organ.

himself for consideration. The truth is that this guiding purpose permeates all the other myriad elements in his consciousness without either losing its identity or altering theirs.

John Stuart Mill speaks of the mind as a "thread of consciousness," and as "a series of feelings." * It is impossible to exaggerate the greatness of the misconception represented by such expressions. The contents of our conscious experience do not form a thread or series. They are not linked together, one after another, in a succession of separate elements. They are not even to be compared to a continuous line running through a surrounding space. These spatial images are all misleading, because they describe psychical things by means of that very quality of the material world which is specially alien to them. They are like efforts to describe white as a sort of black, or the colour blue as a particular variety of smell. They are, indeed, as will appear later on, much more impossible than such efforts as these ; for colours and smells all belong to the same sort or degree of reality. The very use of the word "contents" is misleading. It suggests that mental stores are capable of being packed away in cellars, like wines ; that spiritual wealth is like material wealth, capable of accumulation by mere addition of units or items. Physiology has given a superficial plausibility to this way of thinking by its descriptions of the nature and complication of the brain. We have acquired a tendency to identify every mental element with some cell or part of the grey matter of that organic structure. Yet, whatever be the relation of mind to brain, it is surely clear that feelings, thoughts, desires, in their own intrinsic nature,

* *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, chap. xii.

cannot be identified with nervous matter. It was the obviousness of this truth that led to the description of consciousness as an *epiphenomenon*. It is for this reason that "psycho-physical parallelism," as it is termed, has been so widely accepted. It seems the clearest and simplest solution of the complication of material structure on the one hand, and of psychical elements on the other, to suppose that between psychics and physics there is a perfect parallelism or correspondence, as there is between the convex and concave sides of a curve. But here, again, I think it will be found that spatial images mislead. That, corresponding to the extraordinary complication of physical elements in the brain, there must be a multitude of psychical elements at least equally complex, seems to be probable ; but the manner of the latter complication is such that it cannot be said to be parallel to the former. The physical complex is one of juxtaposition in space, the psychical complex is one of interpenetration of elements. The latter is certainly diverse in kind from the former—so diverse that the word "parallel" seems wholly inapplicable to the relation between them. As will appear, that relation is more truly described as that between a higher and lower reality.

It is not within the scope of our present endeavour to investigate the relation of mind and brain. That is a subject which demands much knowledge of physiology, as well as of psychology. It is highly technical, and is being dealt with by authorities who possess the requisite equipment. It does not seem, however, that their labours have so far led to any very certain results. On the whole, the conception of some kind of parallelism between the physical and the psychical,

between brain and mind, seems to prevail most widely. Yet it must be admitted that this conception is not a scientific doctrine deduced in scientific fashion from the data on both sides. It is rather a metaphysical *pis aller* attained by a final venture of faith, and rendered attractive by its apparent simplicity. Readers of Professor McDougall's *Body and Mind* will be aware how much there is to be said against it on scientific grounds, and how signally it fails, when considered in relation to whole regions of psychical fact, to bring the two realms of mind and brain into harmonious correspondence.

When the principle of the interpenetration of psychical elements is admitted, a very clear distinction is drawn between the two realms. We have indeed attained a definition of no small importance. The world of matter is a world in which the elements are side by side in space : the world of mind is a world in which the elements interpenetrate.

The sweep of this distinction is so wide that it can hardly be grasped at first. It alters inevitably our consideration of all the facts revealed by psychology. Its effect upon our understanding of the subconscious, for example, is specially interesting. In the endeavour to describe this part of our mental possessions, material imagery has been very freely employed. The mind has been compared to layers, or strata, of varying material ; to a bottle ; to a cellar containing stores of many kinds ; to an iceberg with the larger portion of its mass submerged, and liable to sudden overturnings as its equilibrium is altered. The image of the threshold has become part of the recognized terminology of psychology. That part of our mentality of which we are fully conscious, or can be fully conscious at will,

is said to be above the threshold: that part which comes to our knowledge only in unusual or abnormal conditions, or which is detected by others by means of experiment, is said to be below the threshold. It is undoubtedly a very effective mode of description, but it has always been a cause of serious difficulty, and was often felt to be hardly distinguishable from a materialistic view of the nature of mind.

What is to be thought of the mode of existence of these psychic "stores"? The spiritual or mental is given to us as that which exists for consciousness. In the language of the metaphysics of a former period, it exists as "idea," as contrasted with that which exists as matter. But it is the peculiarity of the subconscious that it does not, or need not, attain to consciousness at all; and yet it exists as a real and effective part of our mentality. Psychology has never faced this difficulty with any seriousness or resolution. Yet it is a question of peculiar urgency, if there is to be any consistency in our thoughts. Let us consider the principle of interpenetration in relation to this problem. Here it would seem to be specially illuminating.

We have seen that a purpose which has been consciously formed has the power to permeate a long and varied experience. It would be equally easy to show that a consciously formed purpose may become subconscious and still permeate experience. The fact that it does so permeate experience appears from the fact that when circumstances to which it is relative occur, it controls conduct. Skill and dexterity of every kind depend upon this fact. The speaker, the writer, the pianist, or the motorist, sets out to do a piece of work. One large conscious purpose dominates the whole: but almost all the subordinate details are accomplished by

means of habits involving purposes which were consciously conceived when the man learned his skill, but which have, with practice, become subconscious and nearly automatic. Yet, if any hitch occurs, if any unusual event or circumstance breaks the even flow of habitual action, the subconscious purpose at once becomes conscious, in order to bring about some special adjustment. Here is clear proof that a purpose, when it ceases to be consciously conceived, does not necessarily cease to permeate the whole experience of the subject.

This conclusion is verified by the results of experiments on hypnotized subjects. In the hypnotic trance purposes can be received by suggestion and become incorporated in the mental life, and, while never rising into the normal consciousness, can, in appropriate circumstances, control conduct. One of the most familiar illustrations of this truth is that in which the subject is commanded to perform some action at a given time. It may be some such action as going to a particular bookshelf and taking down a particular volume. Before the time comes, the subject is restored to his normal condition. Wholly unconscious of what has happened during his trance, when the time comes, the subject goes to the shelf and takes down the volume as commanded. Questioned as to why he does so, he gives some reason which has no connection with his actual experience, showing that the purpose which has guided him, while operating decisively in his conduct, has never attained to waking consciousness. Such illustrations could be multiplied indefinitely.

It is surely clear from all these considerations that the psychical *continuum* which constitutes our experience, and which is characterized by the interpenetration

of a great variety of elements which are, or can be, present to consciousness, is also permeated by multitudes of other elements which are not consciously presented, and perhaps cannot be disentangled by any effort of will. And these latter are just as really incorporated in the total mental life as the former.

We must gather from these considerations that the subconscious is a name for those psychical elements which, permeating the whole, are yet not consciously presented, and are in many cases incapable of being presented to consciousness at the summons of the normal will.

When these facts are grasped, the amazing concreteness of the psychical continuum of experience becomes evident. The concreteness of the physical world is as nothing in comparison. It cannot be, because there the various elements stand apart, impenetrable. In the psychical world they enter into one another in a manner which finds no parallel elsewhere. This is, indeed, their peculiar characteristic. The result must be a complexity of the most extraordinary kind. It is a complexity which cannot be described as a structure, for it is not mechanical in its nature. It is said that the smallest living organism is a more elaborate structure than a great Atlantic liner, an *Olympic* or *Titanic*. But in the psychical experience we have a combination of elements far more wonderful, and probably far more multiplex in the number and variety of the elements which go to form the living whole. Here is a unity of a far higher and more complete nature; for it is clear that combination by interpenetration must create a higher degree of concreteness than combination by arrangement of parts in space.

It is important to consider the effect upon our con-

scious life of this blending of the various elements. Somehow or other our consciousness must contain or express this infinite variety. So far as we can see, each element, when it attains distinctness, must do so in consciousness. It may be, indeed, that there are forms of consciousness—or shall we say *psychosis?*—which are not, perhaps cannot be, presented by means of the full effort of conscious attention. But, even if this be so, all the facts of which we are aware unite to prove that in our consciousness we find the nature and essential characteristics of psychic reality.

If what has been said above be correct, we must conclude that our consciousness, in addition to those elements of which we are distinctly aware, contains an indefinite multitude of other elements which are either latent or not obviously part of the experience of which we are conscious, but which yet have some share in it or influence upon it. How can such hidden elements be detected, or how can we, in our actual conscious experience, find evidence of their existence?

This is a very interesting question. It opens up a multitude of avenues for reflection. It suggests the explanation of many facts in our commonest experiences. We are all aware of unknown and unplumbed depths—to use a spatial metaphor—lying below our immediate consciousness. We have the feeling that there is an indefinite "more" always somehow present. It is not apprehended by us, nevertheless it is in some close relation to that which is apprehended. We feel and talk of "the mysterious depths of personality." We often endeavour to explore these depths. We look "within" and question ourselves. We ask, Why did I act in such a way? An immediate and clearly distinguishable motive is perhaps at once apparent. But

we soon become aware that this motive is not the full explanation. There is much more involved. As we try to examine this "more," we are astonished at what we describe as our "mixed motives." When we endeavour to dissolve the mixture into its component elements we become more and more puzzled. To vary the image, we are like a man trying to disentangle a complicated knot. Everywhere we come upon strands which pass away into convolutions that are past our power to unravel.

But, indeed, the facts are not as clear as these material images lead us to imagine. We have no language to describe the mystery of facts partially revealed and partially concealed which our inner consciousness contains. While attention is directed upon the outer world, some action to be performed or something to be dealt with, all is clear and description is easy. But the psychic world involved in our consciousness possesses a complication which we feel but cannot express. As Bergson is fond of pointing out, the concepts of our understanding were framed for the work of the outer world : they are not fitted for the uses of the inner.

We have taken the motive as an illustration ; but any other element would serve equally well. There is no feeling, thought, or desire which is not connected by innumerable links with multitudes of elements which ultimately pass away into the inapprehensible underworld of psychical fact. The most remarkable illustration of all is perhaps to be found when an effort is made to grasp a concrete material thing in its relation to the whole of experience. In relation to the material world about it such a thing stands out clearly defined. Here physical science can deal with it in a marvellously pre-

cise way. But when we endeavour to define it as an element in our conscious experience as a whole, all this preciseness vanishes. It becomes a synthesis of sensations, thoughts, memories, and even of purposes. To pursue this investigation now would lead us too far. It is sufficient to say that here we approach the problem with which all idealist philosophies deal. The whole history of philosophy might be regarded as a demonstration of its supreme difficulty.

According to the usual classification, the main elements of our conscious experience are, as we have seen, three : feeling, thought, and will. It may be useful to point out that, in connection with all three, we can show that there is a hidden world of mental reality which, though not distinct, colours every element in consciousness. Psychologists now lay stress on what is termed feeling-tone as distinct from definite feelings, whether pleasurable or painful. It is a common experience that an undertone of feeling affects all experiences, no matter how varied and changeful. In extreme cases this fact becomes exceedingly obvious, as when there is an undertone of sadness beneath a superficial gaiety, or an undertone of gladness beneath a superficial solemnity. It is always true that a feeling-tone of some quality exists as a pervasive influence. Now, surely it is reasonable to suppose that this feeling-tone is the joint manifestation of all the subconscious feelings. Similarly there are intellectual tendencies which arise from our subconscious thoughts, and there is character, which is the net result of all our dispositions and acts of will. And just as feeling, thought, and will are but different sides of one reality, so feeling-tone, intellectual tendency, and character are but various aspects of the main undercurrent of our mental life. If

this be true, these so-called subconscious elements have certainly their place in our conscious experience, though as distinct elements they are not apprehended.

The more fully these various considerations are examined, the more clearly will it be seen that our conscious experience is a reality which possesses a complexity of the most subtle and extraordinary kind. As compared with physical structures, or even living organisms, its combination of the many in the one is of an essentially higher type. The unity which belongs to it must be of a far more complete character, for a unity characterized by interpenetration of parts must be far more intimate in its nature than a unity which depends upon the arrangements of parts in space.

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CHAPTER II

DEGREES OF REALITY

We have made an effort to gain some knowledge of the nature of the conscious experience of an individual human being. We have tried to grasp this experience as a whole, and have found that, though such an apprehension is beyond our powers, on account of the abstracting character of the faculty by which we gain our knowledge, yet it is possible to arrive at certain results. These may be summed up in the statement that the unity of experience is constituted by the interpenetration of the great multitude of elements which belong to it, and is therefore a unity of higher type, more complex and more concrete, and also more complete, than any other unity of which we are aware.

Let us now turn round and consider the things that we know and deal with, and which we grasp as things within our experience.

It is commonly said that there are in experience always two opposing and contrasted elements—the subject and the object. I, the thinker, am the subject, and present to my consciousness is some object of which I am conscious. Whatever be the full meaning of this distinction, its necessity and inevitableness cannot be denied.

Yet it is difficult to draw a definite line and say,

Here the subject ends, and there the object begins. We can indeed point to some elements and say they appear to be distinctively subjective, and to others and say they are objective. My feelings, for example, seem to belong to myself. That tree is an object apart from me. The former are subjective, the latter is objective. Yet I can consider my feelings, so making them objects of my thought; and I can regard that tree as a group of sensations and relations, thus reducing it to a portion of my subjectivity. It can be truly said that there is no element of my subjective life of which I am aware which cannot be turned into an object, and there is no part of the objective world, so far as I apprehend it, which cannot be reduced to subjective elements. It is on this latter truth that the unanswerable arguments of Berkeleyan idealism depend.

It would therefore seem to be wiser to say that the distinction between subject and object is really a distinction of points of view. We shall see reason to believe that this statement is not quite adequate. For the present it must serve.

When we direct our attention to those elements in our experience which are, or seem to be, distinctively objective, abstracting from our feelings and introspective reflections, we find ourselves face to face with the world of things in space. Thus envisaged, it is a world vast and wonderful in the size and variety of its contents. It is also an intensely interesting world, for we are closely connected with it by means of our bodily senses and other organs of apprehension. We have to deal with it continually. So attractive is it that to the mind unaccustomed to the difficult and painful attitude of introspection it appears the

one certain reality. And all the various forms of mechanical skill by which our bodily organs learn to adjust themselves to the things of the physical world, and the sciences which have arisen out of these mechanical adjustments, conspire together to confirm this impression. While attention is fastened upon these things the subjective side of experience drops out of consideration, and the physical world in all its splendour, and with its marvellous resources, assumes the guise of the universe. It seems to be the all-inclusive totality. Infinite in space and time, endless in variety of form and contents, containing as a part of itself the bodily organism by which we deal with it, its overwhelming greatness seems to justify its claim to be incontestably the Whole.

Yet this it cannot be, because we get to it, and grasp it as a whole, by a process of abstraction. That is, the physical world assumes in our experience its aspect of independent reality only when we leave out certain elements of experience. Experience as we possess it is a fuller, richer thing than the material world, as we grasp it.

This agrees perfectly with the result of our investigation of the nature of experience as a whole. We saw that it possessed a unity higher in kind than the unity of any material or organic body. We now see that we get at the material world by an abstraction which drops out one side of the reality given in experience. By that abstraction we fall from a realm of higher unity to a realm of lower unity.

In the higher realm all elements interpenetrate one another and so form the unity which belongs to that realm. In the lower realm the elements are side by side in space, impenetrable in relation to one another, yet

as related spatially forming one universe. This world of things in space is certainly concrete, but the mode of its concreteness is essentially lower in kind than that which belongs to the world of experience regarded in its fulness.

Here, then, are two quite distinct and strongly contrasted degrees of reality. The higher is that which characterizes our experience in its fulness, including all elements subjective and objective. The lower, attained by abstraction from the subjective, and distinguished by the fact that in it the various elements stand in spatial relations to one another, is that which characterizes a certain partial apprehension of our experience.

The former and higher degree of reality is that in which we live and move and have our being. The latter and lower degree corresponds to what we describe as the material side of life.

Further, let it be noted that it is the nature of the higher degree to take up wholly into itself the lower and all that it contains. For, as we have seen, there is no element in the lower which is not, from the subjective point of view, an element in the totality of our conscious experience. But the process cannot be reversed. The subjective side cannot be absorbed in the material world. By no possibility can a feeling, or thought, or wish be regarded as a thing occupying a definite position in space, and connected by spatial relations with tables and chairs.

While thus exhibiting the relation between the higher reality of conscious experience and the lower reality of the material world, it is important to note that we are not making any statement as to the way in which the material world comes into being. It is

not intended that we should regard the abstraction by which we are enabled to grasp the material world as the process by which that world is created. Nor is it intended to preclude other processes which are possibly at work in our apprehension of the material world.

There are idealist philosophers who regard the objects which we apprehend as shaped by the synthetic activity of the mind. On this doctrine we desire to pronounce no judgment here. The abstracting process, which drops out the subjective element, may very well be combined with a synthetic process by which the manifold of sense is formed into an intelligible world. If there is any truth in what was said above, it is characteristic of our conscious experience that it contains a multitude of interpenetrating elements and processes. Let that be ever borne in mind. The abstracting process is certainly at work. It is characteristic and universal in all mental operations by which we attain to definite apprehensions. It is involved, as we have seen, in the very nature of attention. But it does not follow from this that it is the only process in operation. To regard it as such would be the height of absurdity. It would, as we have just seen, be contrary to what we know of the essential nature of all mental process. We have fastened attention on the abstracting process because thus we gain insight into the truth that within our conscious experience there may be detected degrees of reality.

In our investigation of this subject we do not stop here. We speak of physical science as dealing with the material world. But, when we reflect upon the nature of science, we shall see that the material world

with which it deals is not that world of lower reality which we have just considered. It is something lower still.

The material world of things in space, though much simpler and less concrete than the world of conscious experience, is yet a world rich in colour, sound, and scent, and rioting in most prodigal variety. It is far too complex for scientific investigation. The simple mind of the child of Nature can revel in it as a mere experience. The artist and the poet can enjoy its wealth of detail and its appeal to the imagination. But the scientific mind, which seeks to understand, is helpless before it. It is too full for human intelligence to grasp it. Hence a further simplification is necessary.

We referred above to the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of matter. The former, in Locke's words, are those which "the mind finds inseparable from every particle of matter," such qualities as "solidity, extension, figure, mobility." The latter are those which, according to Locke, are "nothing in the bodies themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us." Such are colours, sounds, smells, tastes, etc. There is good reason to dispute Locke's account of this distinction. But we cannot now pause to consider it. It is sufficient to point out that, if Locke's account is correct, then the world of material things, apart from our knowing of it, is that most unimaginable thing, a world possessing solidity and extension, but utterly devoid of colour, sound, and all other sensible elements.

The true meaning of the distinction is that here we have a further abstraction. The scientific intelligence abstracts from the sensational elements in our experience of the spatial universe. It leaves the secondary

qualities out of account. It is one of the commonplaces of modern thought that physics reduces the whole world to vibrations. Perhaps a better statement would be that physics endeavours to explain the world in terms of measurable quantities. The fact might be thrown into several other forms. But, however expressed, the meaning is that physics abstracts from the secondary qualities—that is, from the sensational element in experience—and expresses its processes and results in terms which belong only to the primary qualities of matter. The tendency of physics is to reduce everything to mechanism, and mechanism is essentially an affair of the primary qualities.

Perhaps it ought to be noted here, in passing, that certain modern sciences seem to be passing beyond this mechanical stage. Biology is the most remarkable instance Here arises the problem of Life, its place and meaning in relation to matter on one side and to conscious experience on the other—a vast subject which cannot now be considered. Let it be observed, however, that, amongst biologists, there are two tendencies of opposite kinds. One school regards Life as a principle which cannot be defined in the terms of physical science, the other is ever striving to reduce Life to mechanism ; for thus only, it conceives, can there be hope of embracing physics and biology in one scheme of thought and explanation.

This illustration emphasizes the fact, indicated above, that physical science deals only with a world of abstract primary qualities. Here, then, is a second grade of abstraction. It reveals a material world much less concrete than the world of our ordinary experience and common sense.

But the process of abstraction does not stop here.

A further stage is attained in the world of geometrical forms. Here the solidity, or impenetrability, of matter is left out, and there remains only position in space. There results a world which is, in essence, completely knowable.

A lower stage still, the last and most abstract of all, is to be found in number.

We have now before us a regular series of stages which may be traced when we examine our experience and the efforts we have made to grasp and understand it.

First, there is the full concrete reality of our conscious experience.

Secondly, the world of material things in space, rich with its endless variety of sensible content.

Thirdly, the colourless, soundless world of physical science, the world of mechanism.

Fourthly, the world of geometry.

Fifthly, the world of number.

It would be possible, no doubt, to find many intermediate stages more or less definite, because the process of abstraction is capable of indefinite application in accordance with the needs of the occasion. But these stages are indicated, both by our general experience and by the history of human thought, as marking the main outline of the process of our dealing with the problem which is presented to us.

The first conclusion which we draw is, that here is a demonstration of the fact that there are *Degrees of Reality*. The conscious experience from which we started, and which is now admitted on all hands to be, for us, the most certain of realities, was shown to possess a concreteness all its own. This concreteness is, relatively to the other stages in the series, the

measure of its reality. Next to it, but lower in the order of concreteness, and therefore of reality, stands the material world of our common sense. Next, and still lower, the world of mechanism known to physics. Lower again, the worlds of geometry and number.

It seems perfectly clear that, unless the fact of abstraction is denied, there is no escaping this conclusion.

Here, also, we discern the reason why it is so difficult to grasp with our intelligence the problems of philosophy. Philosophy aims at understanding the nature and meaning of the highest reality. But our intelligence has been mainly employed amongst the lower realities. In doing this work it has developed its methods and forms. When it turns to the higher realities, it finds itself insensibly using the ideas and imagery which it has gained from its exercises in number, or geometry, or mechanism, or in our common-sense handling of the material world known to our sensible experience. Bergson is right when he says that "our thought, in its purely logical form, is incapable of presenting the true nature of life, the full meaning of the evolutionary movement."

Is there, then, no hope for philosophy? It may seem so, if we are to conclude that our logical forms are incapable of grasping reality in its fulness. Such is the staple argument of Agnosticism. But it is, in fact, a stupid argument. It is a very old puzzle that, on purely logical grounds, walking is an impossibility, for nobody can be in two places at the same time. *Solvitur ambulando* is the ancient and unanswerable reply. Are life and logic, then, incompatible? Surely not; but logic assumes, on every stage of reality, the forms which correspond to that stage. The old puzzle arises simply from the application of the principles of

a lower order to the facts of life and action. Many of the puzzles of philosophy have arisen in the same way.

There is only one way in which this difficulty can be overcome, and that is by continual trying, by never submitting to defeat. Just as intelligence, working in the abstract worlds of geometry and mechanics, formed for itself methods which proved themselves effective, so may we hope that, working in the higher region, it may ultimately succeed in shaping forms which will be adapted to the work which has to be done. Meanwhile, it must be remembered that the existing forms are not valueless. Though imperfect, they must have sufficient connection with the higher reality to be capable of symbolic application to its problems. The one supreme rule for us, in thus using them, must be this: never trust your logical implements very far. Only by keeping very close to actual experience of fact can we be sure that we are not being misled. It is a profoundly true instinct in the average man which makes him distrust philosophical arguments which consist of purely logical processes. In philosophy, the observation of facts is as important as in any science. It would not be wrong to say that it is, if possible, even more important. For philosophy deals with the most concrete of all things—conscious experience in its full reality. Only when moving in pure abstractions can logic be allowed to work itself out independently.

We have now attained to a position which enables us to understand something of our own relation to the world of knowable things. The conscious experience with which we have dealt is, for each one of us, "my experience." The one thing of which we are absolutely certain is our own existence as spiritual beings. When

we examine the living, moving *continuum* of our experience we find that it is a unitary whole in which feelings, thoughts, purposes, decisions, permeate one another. To possess such an experience is to be a spirit. It is because our experience is of this character that, in distinction from the material things which we discern in our contemplation of the more abstract objective world, we call ourselves spirits.

When this relation of our spiritual experience to the material world and to the other realms of abstract being has been grasped, we are able at once to discern more adequately the insufficiency of many theories of the universe which have been held from time to time and are still more or less in vogue.

First, Materialism and its more respectable relative Naturalism are swept away. Matter cannot be the explanatory principle of the universe, because the material world, attained by abstraction, is less real than the world of our conscious experience. Naturalism holds that the universe is a continuous natural development of which the description is to be found in the physical and biological sciences, that it is all of one piece, and essentially mechanical throughout. With this doctrine is usually connected the belief that consciousness is an *epiphenomenon*, a by-product of the mechanism of the brain, a fitful phosphorescence playing over the surface of a series of purely physical processes, which form the true reality in every case. A doctrine of the same general type, but which is a still further advance in the direction of a spiritual philosophy, has been already mentioned: I refer to the doctrine of psycho-physical parallelism. According to it there is a psychical parallel to every physical event. These are, indeed, two sides of the same reality, ad-

vancing in complexity together, on account of their inseparable relation. As nervous structure develops, it is accompanied by a corresponding development in the conscious life of the organism on its psychical side. Thus, the highly organized human brain corresponds to the highly developed human mind. This doctrine, which has relations with pantheism, and especially with the philosophy of Spinoza, is in its modern form to be traced to the psychological investigations of Fechner. It is certainly a very attractive doctrine, and commends itself to that reasonable tendency to be found in most modern minds, which inclines a man to believe that there is truth on both sides of every controversy. Further, this doctrine attracts many who inherit the Hegelian tradition, for if the universe be a completely articulated intellectual system, perfectly logical throughout, why should we not identify that system with that universal development throughout the whole material world to which physical and biological sciences seem to point. Philosophy supplies the logic, science traces its working out in time. In this way Naturalism and Idealism become identified. They are but two ways of expressing the same view of the universe.

It is no wonder that a doctrine which is capable of being presented in such a way carries with it the assent of great numbers of well-informed and thoughtful minds. But the objections to it are very many. Those who desire to examine them with care should consult Professor James Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism* and Mr. Arthur J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. Also, for the psychological discussion of psycho-physical parallelism, Professor McDougall's *Body and Mind* is important. It contains a masterly survey of all recent

psychological investigation bearing on the question, and proves conclusively that all the available evidence goes to show that the synthetic activity of the mind has no immediate correlative in the physical order. He shows this especially in the psychology of meaning and of memory. There is in the brain no dominating unitary agency. The brain, in fact, is an instrument which, like a piano or an organ, is dependent for its proper use upon an operating and unifying agency other than itself. On the basis of physiological and psychological science, Mr. McDougall builds up a powerful argument for the human soul.

All this is of great value. But surely, if we approach the physical order of things in the manner attempted above, from the side of the facts of our own conscious experience the one reality of which we have perfect certainty, it becomes evident that the spiritual and the physical are not parallel. They are not on the same level of reality. The physical order of things is essentially lower in the scale of reality than the spiritual. We arrive at it by abstracting from the fulness of that rich experience which is for us the supremely real thing. We get it, in fact, by leaving out that element, our own subjectivity, which certifies to us the reality of our experience. Thus, whatever may be the final result of the controversy about the relation between mind and brain, the inferior reality of the physical order as compared with the spiritual order is indubitable.

In the philosophy of T. H. Green, and also in that of Lotze, the ultimate reality of the self-conscious subject, or ego, is a cardinal doctrine. With Green this doctrine is arrived at by showing that the self-conscious subject is presupposed in every act of knowledge. It is the unity—nay, more, it is the unifying principle

—which makes relation possible. As all knowledge is of relations, or of things in relation, the unity of the self which holds together the various related elements, and so makes knowledge possible, is the underlying presupposition of all that we call experience. Or, as Lotze puts it, "Our belief in the soul's unity rests not on our appearing to ourselves such a unity, but on our being able to appear to ourselves at all." If a being "can appear anyhow to itself, or other things to it, it must be capable of unifying manifold phenomena in an absolute indivisibility of its nature."*

This argument has been often evaded. It has been seldom really disputed. The most famous and effective effort to show that the self is not to be regarded as, for us, the ultimate principle of unity, is Mr. F. H. Bradley's endeavour, in his great work *Appearance and Reality*,† to show that the self is a contradictory conception, and is therefore mere *appearance*, and not *reality*. In order to reach this conclusion, Mr. Bradley examines the various uses of the term Self and the experiences with which we connect it, and finds serious inconsistencies. His whole argument is based on a psychological analysis. He shows that neither in mere feeling, nor in any intellectual principle, is it possible to find a basis for a doctrine which can define consistently the mode in which the self comprehends in unity the diversity of experience. He admits that the self is "the highest form of experience which we have," but asserts that "for all that it is not a true form. It does not give us the facts as they are in reality; and, as it gives them, they are appearance, appearance and error."

* Lotze, *Metaphysics*, bk. iii., chap. i.

† See chaps. ix. and x.

It is surely an obvious criticism of arguments such as this that every step which they take assumes the truth which they are designed to destroy. In order to criticize the self, you must assume the self. When Mr. Bradley sets to work to analyze the self, he omits to consider that it is the self which is conducting the work of analysis. You cannot identify the self with feeling, or any particular mode of feeling, because that feeling or mode of feeling is, the moment you begin to consider it, included along with a multitude of other things within the grasp of the self. Again, you cannot identify it with any intellectual form, because the moment you begin to consider that form the self in your person has already transcended it.

In fact, it is generally true that no psychological analysis, nor any effort of abstraction, can enable you to grasp the self, because the self is already presupposed as the agent in the process of analysis or abstraction. This consideration is of vital importance. It shows that to explain the self by means of any element or group of elements in experience is impossible, for every element or group of elements, in order to be used for purposes of explanation, must be isolated from the whole of experience by a process of abstraction; and, as in this process the self is already presupposed, the explanation is from the beginning doomed to failure. The self, as the agent in every process of abstraction, cannot itself be an abstraction. It is therefore concrete.

The importance of this conclusion cannot be overrated. The weak point in all the current systems of Absolute Idealism which trace their origin to Hegel, and which are most notably represented in English thought by T. H. Green and his disciples, is that they

turn the concrete unity of the self into an abstract principle. The foundation on which they build is just that unifying agency of the self-conscious subject which we have discussed above. Here they are on a basis which cannot be shaken. But when, on this basis, they have to construct a doctrine which shall include the universe both material and spiritual, they unwittingly treat this unifying self-conscious agency as an abstract intellectual system which unfolds itself in a series of categories and so comes to be the explanatory principle of everything. But very soon it is discovered that this intellectual framework is not able to support the superstructure which is built upon it, that it is not explanatory of anything, and the whole pile comes tumbling down.

The self is not an abstraction of any sort, whether of feeling or of intellect. It is a concrete living experience. The self in each thinking being is, in fact, his conscious experience in its whole concrete reality. The unity of the self is, as all modern philosophical discussions have proved to demonstration, the ultimate unity which lies behind all our thinking and all our living. It is the unity to which every element in our conscious life is referred. It is presupposed in every mental process. How, then, can we fail to identify it with that concrete unity which we have found to belong to our conscious experience as a whole? This concrete unity is characterized by the interpenetration of all the elements involved in our experience. In contrast with it, every other unity is lower in kind, being determined by abstraction from the fulness of the whole concrete experience. By the isolating agency of attention, every object of which we become aware is placed in antithesis to the whole of experience, and

by this antithesis it is determined. What is this antithesis but the fundamental relation of subject and object which is the universally accepted condition of all conscious life? Thus it appears that the conscious concrete experience of the individual is his self, or ego.

We have arrived at this identification by two distinct lines of thought. First, we started from the given facts of conscious experience as revealed by modern psychology. We found it to possess a concreteness to which no other realm of being of which we have knowledge can approach, and we found that these other less concrete realms of being are reached by abstraction from its fulness of reality.

In the second case, we worked upwards from all particular instances of mental apprehension, finding that in them is always presupposed a concrete uniting and integrating agency which is known to us as the conscious self. And, as in all such apprehension, abstraction, which is the work of the self, has been in operation, this self must be concrete—certainly more concrete than anything which it knows.

That the conscious experience of the first line of argument is the same reality as the self of the second is therefore clear.

If this be so, how are we to understand self-consciousness?

It is a common argument with metaphysicians of some schools that, as in experience subject and object are found in inseparable relation, the subject presupposes the object as much as the object presupposes the subject. From this it is concluded that the spiritual is as dependent on the material as the material on the spiritual. The two are, in fact, correlatives, or, to express it in another way, opposite sides of the same reality.

We are now in a position to see that, however convincing this argument may sound as a piece of logic, it is not in agreement with the facts of the case. Subject and object are not correlatives in the ordinary sense. The subject is the concrete whole of experience, the object is an element isolated by abstraction. The former is a concrete reality of a higher order than the latter. It is of the essence of the higher reality to include every possible element of the lower. This must be so, from the very nature of abstraction. Nothing can be, to us, an object of experience which is not, either as feeling, or as sensation, or as concept, or in some other form, an element, or group of elements, in experience. Such are set by themselves, but still within experience, and so become objects of knowledge. All the time, while being known, the concrete reality of experience—that is, of the self—completely enfolds them. Like a crystal sphere—if the spatial image be permitted—the conscious experience—that is, the self—includes all that it knows.

How, then, is self-consciousness possible? Our difficulty in answering this question seems to be entirely due to the material and spatial imagery which we employ so readily. It is certainly true that the entire concrete experience cannot be grasped in a single act of knowledge. In this sense, the self cannot be conscious of itself. Here would appear to be the difficulty which underlies such problems as those discussed by Mr. F. H. Bradley, and which are mentioned above. But, though the whole self cannot be presented to itself as an object, every element in experience can be grasped as in relation to the whole. The self can always relate itself to any element and identify that element as its own. We can say, "my feeling," "my sensation," "my

thought," "the things that I see, or feel, or do." It is true that some groups of elements seem more identified with the self than others. Feelings of pleasure or pain seem to belong to the self more perfectly than sensations of colour or sound. Reflections upon such feelings, to take another example, seem more intimately related to the self than thoughts which apply the concepts of substance or causality to objects in the material world. But it is doubtful whether this distinction is as important as some psychologists have imagined. Its essence surely is simply this, that we abstract from these subjective feelings when we present to our minds the material world or any other of those lower degrees of reality which we have considered. But we have to remember, on the other hand, that we can abstract from the external world, and so present to our minds these so-called subjective feelings. And surely we have no reason to suppose, when this abstraction has been made, that the mental states so defined are nearer to the totality of conscious experience than those which are obtained by other abstractions. Here again an illusion is caused by the presence of spatial apprehensions in one case and their absence in the other. The distinction between internal sense and external sense, and between internal sensations and external sensations, as made by Locke and many others after him, is altogether a distinction depending on the absence or presence of spatial elements. When we abstract from spatial relations we get the internal, when we abstract from the non-spatial we get the external; so that in neither case have we grasped the fulness of our concrete experience. Our apprehensions of the external world on the one hand, and our apprehensions of the internal on the other, distinguishing them, as we are

bound to do, by the presence or absence of spatial relations, are both of them elements in the totality of our conscious experience.

There is, however, one element which certainly seems to correspond more perfectly to the fulness of the life of the spirit. Penetrating every presentation, whether of the internal or of the external worlds, is that complex quality which, from the side of feeling, was described as feeling-tone, from the side of intellect was termed intellectual tendency, from the side of will was called character. Perhaps we may sum up these various aspects of the one reality by means of the term *experience-tone*. Here we have that which marks the relationship of each new apprehension to the whole conscious experience. Yet, even by means of this more concrete element, we have not grasped in its entirety the full reality of the self. For when we present this to our thought, the self is still more than it, being the subject of the presentation.

What, then, is self-consciousness? It is simply our consciousness of the fact that, in relation to all experiences, we possess capacity. Spirit as knowing subject is capacity. By this it is not meant to exclude activity. Activity is certainly of the essence of our conscious life. Capacity and activity are not mutually exclusive. The capacity of the conscious self is blended with active powers. But the essence of self-consciousness would seem to be the ability of the self to contain, and in containing to unite in one concrete whole, an indefinite variety of experiences.

The common conception of the soul, or spirit, or self, as an inner core in the centre of our psychical states, a psychical ganglion, is therefore altogether misleading. It is an idea carried over from our ex-

perience of the material world — another instance of the confusion caused by thinking of spiritual things in terms of spatial things. The fact that such conceptions seem to make things easy for us is really a reason why we should regard them with suspicion. For the further we carry the process of abstraction — the more, that is, we leave out of consideration the puzzling complexities of the psychical world — the simpler and clearer everything becomes. Thus it is that physics is clearer than psychology, geometry clearer than physics, and numerical processes clearest of all. But spirit, possessing the capacity which enables it to grasp in one concrete life all the infinite variety of experience, cannot, as a whole, become clear to our minds. Being greater than all its own thoughts, we should not be surprised that none of them can contain it.

Yet the conscious life of the self is, for itself, possessed of an absolute simplicity. Its simplicity is essential and inherent. This must be so, because of that peculiar unity which we have seen to belong to it. In our active life we are aware of this truth ; or, rather, we assume it as an implicit principle of our whole practical existence. The action of raising the hand, to take an illustration of Bergson's, is, in practice, an indivisible whole. As the performance of a living function, it is perfectly simple. As will carried into act, it possesses an indivisible unity as long as the analytical intellect is restrained. That this estimate of its intrinsic nature is correct is evident from this consideration that a determination of will which is thwarted by some physical difficulty, or by some disorganization of organic function, is a much more complicated thing than a determination which is completed in action.

The meaning of these facts is just this: While we are living in the full possession of our spiritual nature, we enjoy, as a practical thing, the unity of our experience on that level of reality which belongs to it. But when the abstracting intelligence is aroused, and we begin to analyze our experience, we find ourselves involved in processes which are without limit; we discover the infinite complications of our psychical possessions, of our organic functions, of the chemistry of the body and of the physical world of which the body is a part, of the structure of matter, and so on, without end. Descending the scale of reality involves an analysis of the simple into the infinitely complex. As our concrete experience as a whole is broken up by abstraction into realm after realm of lower realities, each with its own characteristic forms of existence and its own laws and principles, so it is with each single action of our spiritual life. In the simplest movement of that life—in the act of vision, for example, or the raising of the hand—will be found, when the living action has been arrested, an endless complication of psychical, physiological, dynamical, geometrical, and numerical processes and principles. All these are involved in it, and each of them, in its own sphere, may be regarded as a condition of it, or an element in it. But none of them, nor even all of them, can be regarded as providing a complete account of it. It includes them all, and is, at the same time, more than them all. It is the concrete reality; they are but abstractions. It is the living fact; they are but dead fragments.

When considering the nature of our experience, we were able to show that, in that experience, the elements interpenetrate one another and so form a unity higher

in kind than the unity of the material world. We are now able to see that even this statement involves a reversal of the true mode of regarding the nature of our concrete experience. It is true that all psychical elements interpenetrate; they permeate one another. But the unity which is thus characterized is not to be regarded as a whole formed by the coming together of diverse elements in this manner. On the contrary, the unity of experience is the primary truth. The living experience is, in its true nature, a simple indivisible whole. The disentangling of interpenetrating elements, or the isolation of any one of these elements, is a work of abstraction. Hence the unending complication of psychological analysis, and the difficulties of introspection. While we are living our practical life all is simple, but the moment we endeavour to understand that life, we find ourselves involved in infinite complexities.

CHAPTER III

THE EXTERNAL WORLD

We saw that when, in our dealing with our experience, we abstract from those elements which we call subjective, we find ourselves face to face with the great world of things in space—a world infinite and splendid, glowing with colour and filled with an endless variety. But we did not venture to say that this world is called into being by that movement of attention which enables us to confront it. Such a contention would be contrary to all the impressions which the external world produces upon us. Perhaps the most striking feature of this great world is its apparent independence of our feelings and desires. Its giant forces resist and thwart us. Only a small part of it is accessible to us. Our bodily organisms which are part of it, and, at the same time, our means of communication with it, are fragile and transitory. To suppose that it is called into being by the operation of our minds and wills is indeed preposterous.

Yet when we approach the consideration of it from the point of view of our conscious experience, we find that every element in the material world, as we know it, is such that it exists, and can exist, only for a conscious subject. For the material world, as we know it, is a complex of sensations, the secondary qualities—

colours, sounds, etc.—and of relations which group these sensations in certain orders—*i.e.*, the primary qualities; and both sensations and relations are essentially of such a kind that they can exist only for a knowing subject. It is an old familiar argument, and is the basis of all forms of modern idealistic philosophy.

Many very determined efforts have been made to overthrow this reasoning, but with failure so signal that they have but succeeded in throwing into relief its unassailable character. When, for example, some of our modern Realists urge that the argument simply amounts to this, that, because the material world is known to us only in so far as it is known, we contend that it cannot exist out of our knowledge, they forget that the real point is that every element of the material world when examined is found to be essentially such that it can have no existence except for the consciousness of a knowing mind.

Upon some minds, the effect of this argument may be described as positively terrifying. It seems to reduce everything to illusion. The whole universe seems to become a panorama which exists for me alone —a panorama which vanishes into nothingness when I cease to be conscious. This is the doctrine which has been termed Solipsism. It does not appear that any reputable thinker has committed himself to this doctrine, but many dread it so much, it has become to them so oppressive a philosophical nightmare, that they escape from it only by a leap in the dark.

It is certainly interesting to find a writer so competent and well informed as Mr. McDougall, the author of *Body and Mind*, writing thus: "We affirm that each of us can escape from solipsism only by an act of faith or will that posits a real world of which he is a

member. This real world appears to each of us in the form of the phenomena of sense perception; but, if he is not to remain a solipsist, he must affirm and believe that these appearances are not created by himself, but are rather due to influences or existences, not himself, yet affecting him. Or, in other words, he must believe in the validity of the category of causation; for only by believing that his perceptions are caused by some influence, some real being other than himself, can he escape from solipsism."* Mr. McDougall justly and wisely adds: "Let him conceive these influences or existences how he will, the psychological problem still confronts him and clamours for an answer."*

But is it not strange to find this appeal to the category of causation repeated nowadays, after all that Kant said about the thing-in-itself, and after Hegel's crushing criticism of that part of Kant's doctrine? The category of causation is but one of the links in the network of relational forms which exist and are valid only within the mind's conscious experience. How can it be used to get us outside that experience?

To Bishop Berkeley belongs the supreme honour of setting to the modern world the central problem with which its philosophy has to grapple. That honour is generally given to Hume. But, in truth and justice, it belongs to Berkeley. The utter negation which characterized Hume's scepticism may have had the effect of stimulating the constructive faculties of his successors, but Berkeley's doctrine exhibited more perfectly the central problem. Kant answered Hume: and modern psychology, with its demonstration of the synthetic activity of conscious experience, has finally

* *Op. cit.*, p. 180.

cut away the basis of Hume's arguments; but Berkeley remains, and no metaphysical or psychological criticism has succeeded in overthrowing his main thesis.

Not only is this so, but it is true, and has been too little realized, that recent psychology has supplied much additional material for the support of Berkeley's doctrine. Let me give an illustration. There are many people who suppose that the study of the physiology of the brain is leading to a purely materialistic view of our conscious life. But the researches dealing with the nervous mechanism of the organs of sensation point in the opposite direction. So far as the evidence goes, the character of a sensation seems to depend on the nature of the organ that receives it, rather than on that of the object which excites it. To quote Binet, the eminent French psychologist, "Excitants wholly different, but affecting the same nerve, give similar sensations. Whether a ray of light is projected into the eye, or the eyeball is excited by the pressure of a finger; whether an electric current is directed into the eye, or, by a surgical operation, the optic nerve is severed . . . the effect is always the same, in the sense that the patient always receives a sensation of light. . . . In addition to the natural excitant of our sensory nerves, there are two which can produce the same sensory effects—that is to say, the mechanical and the electrical excitants. Whence it has been concluded that the peculiar nature of the sensation felt depends much less on the nature of the excitant producing it than on that of the sensory organ which collects it, the nerve which propagates it, or the centre which receives it. . . . On thinking it over, it will be found that this contains a very great mystery, for this power of distinction of our nerves is not connected

with any detail observable in their structure. It is very probably the receiving centres which are specific. It is owing to them and to their mechanism that we ought to feel from the same excitant a sensation of sound, or one of colour—that is to say, impressions which appear, when compared, as the most different in the world. Now, so far as we can make out, the histological structure of our auditory centre is the same as that of our visual centre. . . . When (therefore) we attempt to understand the inmost nature of the outer world, we stand before it as before absolute darkness. There probably exists in Nature, outside of ourselves, neither colour, odour, force, resistance, space, nor anything that we know as sensation. Light is produced by the excitement of the optic nerve, and it shines only in our brain; as to the excitement itself, there is nothing to prove that it is luminous; outside of us is profound darkness, or even worse, since darkness is the correlative of light. In the same way, all the sonorous excitements which assail us . . . are produced by excitements of our acoustic nerve: it is in our brain that noise is produced, outside there reigns a dead silence. The same may be said of all our other senses. Not one of our senses, absolutely none, is the revealer of external reality. . . . In short, our nervous system, which enables us to communicate with objects, prevents us, on the other hand, from knowing their nature. It is an organ of relation with the outer world; it is also, for us, a cause of isolation. We never go outside ourselves. We are walled in."*

It is certainly profoundly interesting to the student of philosophy to find that physiology, the science

* Binet, *The Mind and the Brain* (L'Âme et le Corps), chap. ii.

which was supposed, in its earlier days, to be the most effective handmaid of materialism, should thus open the shortest way to the central fact on which Idealism is based. It brings us back again to the old problem, and shows that Berkeley still holds the central position in philosophy.

May I venture to express the wonder that I have often felt that, here in Berkeley's own University, his supreme greatness has been so little realized, and so little has been done to honour him? With the exception, perhaps, of John Scotus Erigena, Berkeley is the only Irishman whose teaching takes its place as a necessary element in the main stream of human thought. He belongs to the great succession of the Immortals. He takes rank with Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant. This fact has received some degree of recognition in every country but Ireland. I speak what I know when I say that teachers of great eminence, in other Universities, now present Berkeley's doctrine as the true introduction to the study of modern philosophy. And it is certainly the fact that no one knows where he is in philosophy until he has grasped the central thought of Berkeley's teaching.

And how delightful it is to contemplate the man himself in relation to his spiritual philosophy! The charm of his personality, the purity of his character, the noble self-sacrifice which made him resign high office and emolument here for an uncertain missionary venture in the Far West, the union of sweetness of disposition with the greatest moral and intellectual daring, the beauty of his literary style—all these conspire with his supreme greatness as a thinker to give Berkeley a position which is all his own. He is certainly the

brightest ornament of this University and the greatest philosopher that Ireland has produced.

When the thought which finds its expression in Berkeley's philosophy has been grasped, it becomes evident how urgent is the question which we ventured to substitute for that which is usually regarded as the fundamental question of philosophical inquiry. Instead of the question, How is experience possible? we suggested this: Conscious experience being given, how is anything else possible? How is an independent world of material things possible? And, further, how is a multitude of spiritual beings, each possessing its own conscious experience, possible? These two seem to me to be the leading questions of modern philosophy. Since the conscious experience of the individual thinker, when it is examined—whether by simple introspection or with the help of physiology and psychology—shows that there is no single element in the material world, or in those material manifestations which are to us the evidences of the activity of other minds, which is not essentially of such a nature that its existence is dependent on its being known by the conscious subject, how can either the material world or other subjects exist at all? Sensations exist only when we feel them; relations exist only when we think them: how can a world which is made up of sensations and relations exist apart from a mind which feels and thinks it? That is the question round which all modern philosophy has revolved. On the present occasion we shall consider it exclusively with reference to the material world, reserving for a later stage the problem of the multitude of conscious subjects.

Modern philosophy has attempted many answers to this question. First, there is the answer which was

given by some of the old school of Scottish thinkers, and which, as already noted, is relied on by Mr. McDougall. We must apply, it is said, the principle of causation. We attribute the sensations which are produced in us to the agency of things outside ourselves. Colours, sounds, and other sense impressions are the effects of external causes. The inference is justified by the law that every effect must have a cause.

People who argue in this way forget that modern intellectual idealism, in its examination of the conditions of knowledge, has supplemented Berkeley's argument by showing that the things which produce these effects in us—*i.e.*, the things which excite our senses through eyes, ears, etc.—are themselves, in every element of their being, constructed by thought. They, quite as much as the sensations, exist only as known by the conscious subject.

If, like Kant, we insist on going a step further and demand a thing-in-itself outside thought, we gain nothing. For this thing-in-itself is not a cause. Causation is essentially an idea, a category of thought, and cannot exist outside thought.

But I know some people are not convinced by an argument of this last kind. It sounds like a logical catch. For such, there is an easy substitute. These things outside experience are made up entirely of the primary qualities of matter. They have no colour, no sound. They dwell in eternal darkness and silence. Colours and sounds are only effects they produce in us. A world of such things surely is not a real world.

Secondly, there is the means of escape adopted by the Hegelian school. Professor Maguire put it briefly and admirably in the following words: "Kant, in answering Hume, brought into prominence what he

called the *à priori* element in human experience. That element Hegel cut loose from its subjective fastenings, and the universe

"'Self-balanced, on its centre hung.'" *

In less pictorial language this means that the categories of thought, being essentially universal in character, are not to be regarded as belonging to the conscious experience of the individual, but must be accepted as the scheme of the whole universe.

We have here the essential idea of Hegelianism. It seems eminently reasonable, because it is the acceptance of reason, as we possess it, as the absolute order of things. Moreover, this noble doctrine can trace its pedigree back to Plato, the inspired philosopher of the ancient world.

It has, however, one great defect: it reduces the universe to an abstraction. Concrete reality is to be found only in the experience of the individual. It is as true of Hegel as of Locke that he gives us a world of primary qualities, a world devoid of colour, sound, and all that gives fulness of reality to our experience. Indeed, he gives us less than Locke gave us, for his world is essentially a system of abstract ideas. It has not even the solidity of Locke's world.

As Pringle-Pattison shows in his *Hegelianism and Personality*, the sensible variety of the world of our experience, the infinite detail of things as they are, troubled Hegel not a little. It annoyed him that the actual world refused to fit itself into his scheme of thought.

A very thoroughgoing criticism of the philosophy of abstract ideas is to be found in the work of Bergson.

* Maguire, *Lectures on Philosophy*, p. 188.

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We have seen that the various schools of thought are now in practical agreement that our conscious experience as a living, moving *continuum* must be accepted as the given reality. The movement of this *continuum* is of its essence. Now, as Bergson points out, "the forms which the mind isolates and stores up in concepts are only snapshots of the changing reality. They are moments gathered along the course of time; and, just because we have cut the thread which binds them to time, they no longer endure." "They enter into eternity if you will, but what is eternal in them is just what is unreal." Reality is not a collection of snapshots. It is more like a cinematograph which blends a multitude of snapshots into an apparently continuous movement. But reality is more: it is a genuine *continuum*. Elements, whether they be intellectual forms or not, cut out of the living reality, must always be less real than the concrete moving *continuum* itself.*

A third endeavour to solve the great problem we are now considering has been made by a school of writers which includes many names of great distinction in modern philosophy. They are usually described as Pluralists. The rise of Pluralism is to be traced to the failure of Hegelianism.

Hegelianism, with its doctrine of the universal as a system of categories logically evolving, failed to answer both of the two great fundamental questions. It could account neither for the existence of an independent material universe rich with colour and infinitely various in its contents, nor for the multitude of self-conscious beings. Neither the one nor the other of these two realities can be made to fit within the scheme of the Hegelian logic.

* See Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, chap. iv.

Thinkers of the idealistic schools therefore began to fall back upon that central truth which forms the starting-point of all idealisms: the conscious experience of the individual as a given reality, and the self-conscious subject or self as the fundamental unity which that experience presupposes.

Pluralism regards the universe as a great community of conscious selves The self with its experience is the fundamental fact behind which we cannot go. That selves exist in great multitudes we also know. Here, then, is the final constitution of things. Again, selves are not necessarily all at that level of development which we are aware of in our civilized human consciousness. They may be at all stages, and in all possible degrees, of conscious completeness. They may sleep in rudimentary forms, awaken in animal life, reach self-consciousness in educated man. These with their interrelations and interactions form the universe.

Every student of the history of philosophy will recognize the likeness of this doctrine to Leibnitz' doctrine of monads. It is also a striking fact that in later times it can, with some qualification, claim such names as Fichte and Lotze. In our own generation there is a host of thinkers, differing widely in many respects, who must be classed as Pluralists. Most of these have rebelled strongly against the Hegelian tradition. Others, and especially Dr. McTaggart, hold that their particular form of the doctrine contains the true interpretation of Hegel.

Pluralism inevitably regards the material world as due to the action and reaction upon one another of the whole multitude of spiritual beings—of conscious selves. The world has come into being as the medium

of their intercourse, and has been created by that intercourse.

Those who desire to see this view worked out will find it in the writings of Professor James Ward, of Cambridge. Though not himself a Pluralist, he has affinity with that school. In two great series of lectures, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, and *The Realm of Ends*, he has given to the world a most powerful refutation of Naturalism, a sympathetic criticism of Pluralism, and a statement of his own doctrine of spiritualistic Monism.

Professor Ward shows that we attain to our knowledge of the material world by "intersubjective intercourse," and that as this objective knowledge develops there takes place, at the same time, and in perfect correspondence with it, a development or realization of self-consciousness. As a social being man grasps the world, and at the same time learns to know himself. There can, I think, be no doubt that this is a true account of the process. But Professor Ward, and those who agree with him, go further. They regard this process as not merely the learning of a truth, but as the actual determination, or making, of it. For the older idealistic conception of the individual mind making its experience, is substituted the conception of the general mind, the social mind (or, more properly, all minds in interaction with one another), making that universal experience which, on the objective side, is the world.

It cannot be denied that this doctrine is a great advance on the older and more individualistic doctrines of the same school. Yet it must be admitted that it is really a form of solipsism. Professor Ward acknowledges that "it does not carry us beyond the wider

solipsism of Kant's consciousness in general." It comes simply to this, that the physical world, the immense order of things in space, the stars whose light takes thousands of years to reach our globe, the generations of living organisms which passed away ages before man appeared on the earth, the flaming atmosphere of the sun, the central masses of the earth, the minute structures which are hidden from our measurements in all the living tissues of animate creation: all these things—as well as those which our hands handle and our eyes behold—are brought into being by the converse of the conscious minds which form the only truly existing reality. Perhaps it is going a little too far when Mr. McDougall declares that this doctrine implies that "the whole series of geological formations came into being when it was discovered, or perhaps at the moment when it was officially recognized by the Royal Society."*

It is impossible, I think, to escape the conclusion that doctrines of this nature reduce the physical universe to a phantom. The only distinction from ordinary solipsism is that, in this case, while there is a distinct illusion for each distinct self, all these illusions, having been developed by co-operation, harmonize so as to present the appearance of being various aspects of an independent world. The mystification is on a vaster scale, but it is a mystification none the less.†

Before we leave the criticism of the various schools of thought which have tried and, in our belief, have failed to solve the problem of the material world, it is

* *Body and Mind*, pp. 185, 186.

† A valuable treatment of this doctrine will be found in Professor Bosanquet's work, *The Principles of Individuality and Value.*

necessary to notice the remarkable revival of Realism which has taken place in some quarters in recent years. The most influential teacher of this new school is, perhaps, Professor S. Alexander, of Manchester University. His statement may justly be regarded as the most important which has as yet been made.* Its brevity and clearness leave nothing to be desired, and the philosophical world may well feel grateful to Professor Alexander for putting it in possession of a document so fully representative of the school to which he belongs.

The essence of his doctrine is contained in the following passages. The "mind and its object are two separate existences connected together by the relation of togetherness or compresence, where the word 'compresence' is not taken to imply coexistence in the same moment of time, but only the fact of belonging to one experienced world. The mental partner is the act of mind which apprehends the object, an act continuous with the whole tissue of mental processes which, considered as a whole, is the mind. The object is what it declares itself to be, square, table, colour, or the like." "This statement does not mean the mere distinction of the act of mind from its object, or so-called content." It means that "the object of the mental act is a distinct existence from the mental act." "But the intent of the proposition is not merely to assert the independent existence of the object, which is therefore non-mental, but even more to assert that the mind is also a thing existent side by side with it, itself one of the things which make up the universe, and one of a number." The mind "does not experi-

* *The Basis of Realism*, by S. Alexander. Proceedings of the British Academy, vol. vi., 1914. Oxford University Press.

ence itself in the same way as it experiences objects. Common speech says, indeed, the mind is aware of itself as well as of objects. But while the objects of which it is aware are distinct from its awareness, the self of which it is aware consists in its awareness." This awareness Professor Alexander calls "enjoyment." The mind "enjoys but does not contemplate itself."

From this analysis two results follow: First, "there is in ourselves no other self than that which we know in enjoyment, whether as enjoyment immediately at the moment, or as supplemented by remembered and expected enjoyment; or mediately as supplemented by inferred enjoyment; or by reflective synthesis of all these data." "Secondly, our compresence with physical things, in virtue of which we are conscious of them, is a situation of the same sort as the compresence of two physical things with one another."

In order to make these results clearer, Professor Alexander supposes a mind and its object to be contemplated by a superior being. "For such a superior being (say, God) they would be separate things, and if A (the mind) is perceiving B (the object), he would see in this nothing but a state of things in which B stirs A to a conscious action and A becomes conscious of B, but B does not owe its character as B to its being perceived by A."

"Hence," according to Professor Alexander, "it follows that the distinction of enjoyment and objects contemplated is more fundamental than that of act of mind and its object (of experiencing and being experienced)."*

This is surely an extraordinary piece of argumenta-

* *Op. cit.*, p. 4 *ff.*

tion. By introducing the words "compresence" and "enjoyment," and claiming that they represent something more fundamental than the relation of subject and object, an effort is made to find a basis for the assertion—and it is nothing but an assertion—that the mind and its object are "separate things" existing "side by side." This is indeed mediæval logic with a vengeance. First you lay down your definition, and then you deduce *à priori* your facts, and woe to Nature if she does not correspond! Mr. Alexander's whole philosophy is summed up in the word "compresence." But his use of this word seems to me to be a begging of the whole question. To find out what we mean when we speak of the object being *present* to the subject or the subject *present* to the object, or, if Mr. Alexander prefers, what is meant by the "compresence" of the subject and object, the only safe method surely is to interrogate Nature, to examine experience, and observe in what way subject and object come together. When we do so we find that the subject is always the knower—or shall we say the experiencer?—and the object is always the known, or the experienced. I defy Mr. Alexander to catch them together in any other relationship. He admits this too implicitly, though he struggles to evade it, when he seizes on the word "enjoyment." It comes exactly to the same thing, for the simple reason that the subject is always the enjoyer, and the object is always the enjoyed, and you can never catch them apart.

It is strange, also, how easily Mr. Alexander admits the description of the mind and its object as "separate things." The one fundamental and universal characteristic of the mind and its object is that they are never separate in experience, nor can the wit of man

by any exertion reduce them, even in imagination, to a condition of separateness. Of course, if A is the mind and B the object, and A + B the relation between them, it is easy to consider A and B separately. But these symbols are mere algebra, and in using them of mind and its object we are employing them in relation to realities which are not susceptible of algebraic treatment. This seems to reveal very clearly the vice of the whole procedure. It is an application of physical and quantitative methods to realities which are not quantitative.

Apart altogether from logical considerations, Mr. Alexander's doctrine of Realism fails to take the simplest facts of experience as they stand. How far this goes appears when he comes to consider the nature of the object. He holds "that not minds only know, but in an extended sense a physical thing 'knows' other things to the extent of its receptivity. This follows at once from the analysis of knowing proper, the knowing which consciousness has; and is, when considered carefully, only another way of stating that analysis. The cognitive relation proper is the compresence between the physical object and another thing when that thing has the property of consciousness. The peculiarity of cognition arises not from the relation, but from the empirical character of the subject. In this case the universal relation of compresence between finites is named cognitive after its term. We may extend the sense of cognition, and, calling compresence 'knowing,' may ascribe 'mind' to all things alike, in various degrees."*

Here is the admission that the relation of subject to object is always a relation of the knower to the

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 31, 32.

known, that "compresence" as it exists between mind and its object is always of this special character. But instead of arguing from this that we have no right to give it any other character, Mr. Alexander, obsessed by his idea of compresence, concludes that there is a sense in which the object knows the subject. If I know the tree, it follows, according to him, that the tree knows me. If I see the blueness of the sky, the blueness of the sky sees me. If I have a recollection of last summer, my recollection of last summer, in some sense, recognizes me. These may be logical conclusions, but it cannot be said that there is a particle of evidence for them in experience.

The truth is, surely, that the whole idea of compresence is delusive. The subject is not present to the object in the sense in which the object is present to the subject. The relation of subject to object is not comparable with the relation between two material things in space. Mr. Alexander argues all through as if it were. But there is no foundation for this but his own arbitrary use of the idea of compresence.

Another very remarkable peculiarity of Mr. Alexander's doctrine is that he accepts the view that mind is nothing more than the total of mental acts, or processes, and yet he regards mind as a "thing" in the same sense in which he calls a physical object a "thing." He holds that "while the objects of which it (the mind) is aware are distinct from its awareness, the self of which it is aware consists in its awareness." "There is in ourselves no other mind than that which we know in enjoyment." Put generally, this doctrine is that the very being of mind is its experiencing.

If this be so, how can the mind and its object be "separate things"? There can be no experiencing

without a thing experienced. The experiencing and the experienced are inseparable. Take the case of feeling: the feeling and the felt cannot be parted. The very word "feeling," standing as it does both for the mental "enjoyment" and the object enjoyed, marks the fact that the two sides of the relation are absolutely dependent upon one another for their very existence. Mr. Alexander's doctrine of "mind" involves the denial of his whole philosophy.*

It seems, then, that none of the means which have been devised by recent philosophy to solve the problem which Berkeley presented to the world have proved satisfactory. Berkeley's own solution remains; and it may be truly said that it is to his thought that most devout and spiritual minds now turn when they find themselves confronted with the vast problem which we are considering. While Berkeley has been misunderstood or neglected, and often derided, his central principle stands, and those who cling to it have a firm hold upon reality. The world does not realize the greatness of its indebtedness to Berkeley. Many even of those who have profited most have least recognized the source of the benefit.

The essence of Berkeleianism is just this: the principle which gives us a real world, independently of the individual human thinker, is to be found, not in the constitution of matter, nor even in the human mind, but in God.

The most influential of the forms which this doctrine has assumed in recent times is that presented by the

* A striking illustration of the entanglement of unnecessary entities in which the modern Realist is apt to be involved will be found in Mr. Bertrand Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*, published in the "Home University Library."

late T. H. Green, of Oxford. High spiritual enthusiasm and personal influence combined with a firm grasp of philosophical principle to give his exposition great power and persuasiveness. Green counted himself a disciple of Hegel, but he was far nearer to Berkeley, both in spirit and in doctrine. It was strange that he did not discern this fact. It is to be feared that philosophers, however religious in spirit and tendency, have a horror of orthodoxy. It is the surprising orthodoxy of Berkeley that has spoiled his reputation.

It must be admitted that Berkeley's mode of presenting the work of God in human experience laid him open to the charge of regarding the world as an illusion specially created for man's benefit by Divine agency, a mystification practised upon us by the Almighty. This was mainly due to his inevitable use of the word "idea" in the manner of Locke, together with the fact that, for him, this term stood especially for sense-impression. To say that material things are only ideas seems to reduce them to mere illusion; and this appearance was confirmed by the doctrine that ideas (*i.e.*, sense-impressions) are produced in us by the will of God. To use a modern illustration, the mind of man seemed to be regarded as a sheet upon which a Divine magic-lantern operator throws various images for purposes of edification.

In Berkeley's thought this seeming was corrected by the doctrine that the images which God produces in us are not produced arbitrarily, but in accordance with certain archetypes which are in the Divine mind. They represent, that is, a great objective order, and are the means by which that order, which is the essential reality of things, is conveyed to us. This is, indeed, a very noble doctrine, and, when fully grasped,

it will be found to bring Berkeley's teaching into a supremely important position in relation to the subsequent development of spiritual philosophy.

Compare Green's doctrine. According to him, the conscious experience of every man is the reproduction, in a gradual and partial way, of the eternal consciousness. Man's knowledge is the outshining, under the conditions imposed by our limited and imperfect life, of the Divine and perfect knowledge. When thus stated, it is hard to distinguish the two doctrines. Green was in advance of Berkeley only in so far as he was able to take advantage of the great discussion of the intellectual side of knowledge due to Kant and his successors. This appears in his emphasis upon the self-conscious subject of knowledge—the self, or ego. It is the corner-stone of his doctrine that the self is implied in every act of knowledge, and is the unifying principle of experience. This self, with its experiences, is the manifestation, in a limited and intermittent way, of the universal consciousness. Thus, all experiences are unified, and the individual takes his place in the life of the Absolute. Every human experience is a partial incarnation of the Divine. The universal consciousness which gives being to the whole universe thinks in me, and so I have a share in the universal experience.

This great doctrine is open, however, to very serious criticism. What about the multitude of self-conscious subjects? As the late William James put it, "How can many consciousnesses be at the same time one consciousness?"* How can the identity of the self be preserved, if the self that thinks in every experience be the one absolute self? The fact is that Green's doc-

* James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, lect. v.

trine annihilates the individual, and thus destroys the whole foundation on which his philosophy rests. If the universal consciousness merely meant an abstract system of forms of thought which are found to be one and the same in every individual experience, then, no doubt, the doctrine would be perfectly correct. But it would be also perfectly valueless; because an Absolute which is a mere abstraction is, as we have seen, too poor a thing to be the ultimate reality. On the other hand, if the Absolute which reproduces itself in every man is a concrete conscious experience, then the man loses his own proper personal identity, the self in him is the Divine self, all his thoughts and actions are the thoughts and actions of God working in him, he has no distinct mind or will of his own—a conclusion which contradicts the very experience on which the whole philosophy is founded.

We here touch a discussion which belongs to another part of our subject. It is relative to our present purpose, because it contains one of the attempted answers to the question already mentioned. If the world as known to us consists of sensations and relations, things which have no being except for a conscious mind, how can there be any world at all except the world of the individual conscious experience? The answer now is: There is no world but such as exists for conscious experience; but there is a universal conscious experience which includes all other such experiences, and therefore there is a world which is more than your thought or mine.

In spite of the criticisms, which I have just ventured to make, of the form of this doctrine which is most commonly accepted by idealists of the school of Green, I am convinced that here is to be found an indication

of the only safe path. Here we get nearer to the truth than in any other of the several types of thought on this question which we have examined hitherto.

Let us consider what it is that we are seeking. Conscious experience being given, how can there be a world of material things? We have seen that this world of material things is actually got at by a process which on the negative side is a process of abstraction. So it is in the experience of every individual. Withdrawing attention from the subjective element and fastening attention on the objective, we find the external world —the world in space. This is true in the most elementary experiences as well as in the most complex perceptions. A sudden glare of light affects the eye. At first the subjective feeling of pain holds the attention. Then attention turns away from this subjective experience to the objective element which it involves. At once a brightly coloured surface is revealed; and that glowing surface is, in its own limited way, a world in space: it is essentially spatial.

Dealing thus with our larger and more complex experiences we get knowledge of an infinitely varied world of things in space—that is, of things external to one another—a world glowing with colour, rich with all those qualities which are apprehended by our senses, a world which is certainly in its own degree concrete and which is apparently self-sufficing. And the more our knowledge of this world grows, the greater and more complex is it found to be, and the more do we become conscious of it as containing powers which are independent of us, powers which resist and thwart us, powers which can only be dealt with by obedience to rules which we have to discover by long and painful experience.

To suppose that such a world as this is illusion, an

unreality, a vision belonging to our own subjectivity, is certainly the height of absurdity. Or to suppose that it is a vision which has been brought about by actions and reactions between ourselves and other beings like us is equally absurd.

Yet when we examine all the elements of this great world as we grasp them in our subjective capacity, we find them to be, every one of them without exception, such that they could have no existence except as so grasped.

And here comes in the compromise suggested by common sense and turned into a philosophical doctrine by Locke, the Scotch Realists, Mr. McDougall, and many another. Some of the qualities which we attribute to the material world are only effects excited in us. Such are colours, sounds, tastes, smells, sensations of heat and cold, etc. Others are in the things themselves and exist independently. But what an unreal thing is this world of primary qualities which thus results—a world of colourless extension, of soundless collisions, a world which is, in truth, wholly unimaginable, and only thinkable in terms of the barest abstractions. As a matter of fact, a world of primary qualities is only the ghost of a world, an unreality which is obtained by leaving out all that constitutes the fulness of the material world that we know.

There is only one way by which the independent existence of the world can be secured: By assuming the existence of a Universal Conscious Experience which gives being to the material world in all its elements and qualities both primary and secondary. In some way or other, we conscious beings must share in the life and experience of this Supreme Being. "In Him we live and move and have our being. There-

fore we, too, are self-conscious and other-conscious. Therefore we enjoy the vision of the world in all its splendour and variety.

In bringing before you this great doctrine, which must in some form be familiar to most of you, my purpose is not, of course, to set it forth as anything fresh or unusual, but simply to show that recent philosophy has neither invalidated it nor found any more probable or reasonable way of justifying our belief in the material world as a reality independent of our shifting and uncertain subjectivity.

The argument which leads to this conclusion seems to be a signal instance of that method of proof which we owe to the genius of Kant—the argument from a fact to its only possible interpretation. Conscious experience is possible only as the experience of a self-conscious subject. A world in space, independent of you and me and every finite self, is possible only as involved in the experience of a universal self-conscious subject in whose life we have a share. However difficult it may be to reconcile these two assertions, I can find no way of escaping either of them. They seem to me to be the most certain conclusions of which thought is capable. The conclusions of mathematics and of physics belong only to certain limited abstract spheres. These conclusions belong to the full concrete reality as given in experience, and are based upon the one principle which has universal validity in the sphere of that concrete reality.

It is most important that we should see clearly that this doctrine secures to us the full reality of the physical world as known to us in our ordinary experience, and that it is the only doctrine which does secure that full reality. We look out upon the world with all

its wealth of colour as well as of form, we rejoice in its brightness, its beauty, its infinite variety. It is this world—the world that we see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and touch with our hands—that we must believe to exist apart from us in the fulness of its nature. This is the world whose reality must be secured against the attacks of sceptical thought. Metaphysics may seek to substitute for it a world of unknowable things-in-themselves, or a world of abstract primary qualities; or science may tell us that what we see and hear and touch is mere appearance, that the only true reality is a complicated arrangement of whirling electrons. But all such theories fail to satisfy the demands of our minds and hearts. Such metaphysical and scientific teachings endeavour to explain the concrete reality of our experience by means of thin abstractions or vague unrealities. It is an effort to do the impossible.

Only when we see in the physical world about us a living concrete experience, universal and infinite, glowing with vivid colour and instinct with movement, an experience in which each one of us has his share, can the reality of the world be assured to us.

Perfectly justifiable on philosophical grounds as I believe this doctrine to be, it is also true that the realization of it comes to many minds as a veritable revelation from above. It is a vision of all things in God, and is often attained by sudden insight. Thus has the vision been described by one who experienced it: "I remember very distinctly the time, many years ago, when the vision of all things in God came to me first. Alone, surrounded by the wild scenery of rock and moorland, amid all the beauty and splendour of a bright summer morning, every blade of grass glittering

with dew, the air filled with the throb of awakening life, the whole infinite variety of form, colour, sound, movement, blended by some all-uniting influence into one experience, overpowering, immense, beautiful—there came to me, in one swift intuition, the meaning of it all : this limited experience of mine is a share in the great universal experience in which I live and move and have my being. The colours that I see, the sounds that I hear, the forms and relations of things, the whole interrelated world of Nature, cannot in reality be other than I discern them to be for me as I apprehend them. Rather must it be true that this experience of mine, which I now apprehend as the experience of a spiritual being, is part of a vaster spiritual experience—an experience which enfolds me and my experience within itself, and makes me a partaker in its universal life. Nor have careful reflection in the years that have passed since then, nor the reading and pondering of many philosophies, at all dimmed the brightness of that vision or impaired the revelation it conveyed."

It is certainly true that the doctrine which we have thus arrived at is open to criticism in the sense that it raises many questions which demand consideration. The most important of these will come up for investigation in the following chapters. Those which are most pressing will occur immediately to every thoughtful mind. Does not this doctrine make man to be a part of God? Does it not, therefore, implicitly deny man's real personality and freedom? Is it not essentially a form of Pantheism and subject to all the objections which make Pantheism untenable? By what legitimate means can we pass from the individual experience to the universal experience? Is not this

the very difficulty which destroys the value of Green's doctrine? These questions are very urgent, and must be considered. We shall, I think, find that we have already gained principles which provide a sufficient answer to them. But, even if they were not susceptible of reasonable treatment, they do not invalidate the conclusion that the only possible way of justifying our belief in the physical world, as a reality independent of the experience of every finite mind, is to postulate a great world-mind whose conscious experience gives being to the whole physical universe. For, as we have seen, the argument by which we attain to this conclusion is an argument from a fact to its only possible explanation. To expect that such a conclusion should at once dissipate all doubts and answer all questions is to demand too much. Though many problems should remain unsolved, it would still be true that no otherwise can the existence of an independent physical world, including within its sphere all our partial experiences of it, be justified.

It is but seldom realized how vast is the sweep of this great conclusion. In every department of thought and life we need a standard—an absolute—if we are to be saved from utter confusion. Is truth anything more than opinion? Is morality anything more than tribal custom? Is beauty anything more than fashion and convention? Such questions open up endless controversies. But surely it is clear that, apart from any discussion of the various doctrines which have been held on these great subjects, it makes all the difference in the world if we believe in a universal mind which, in giving being to the whole universe, sets also standards for all the great values which we recognize in the universe.

Mr. Balfour, in his recent Gifford Lectures, appealed very powerfully to this argument from the necessity of a standard in truth, æsthetics, and morals. It is strange that he does not perceive that the true foundation for this appeal is to be found in the idealist argument for the being of God. If we share in a universal experience, then we share also in the standards of truth, beauty, and goodness which belong to that experience. Our modes of estimating values are all imperfect apprehensions of the absolute standards which exist in God alone. Take the case of beauty. Opinions differ among individuals, and still more widely among communities and races, as to what is beautiful and what is ugly. So far does this difference go, that it seems quite reasonable to maintain that beauty is essentially a matter of fashion and convention. Yet we observe that with the advance of civilization there is a growing agreement as regards the beautiful in Nature, human faculties become more and more able to detect this beauty, and then it turns out that, in Nature, beauty—a beauty which appeals to our taste—is the rule, and ugliness is the exception. The inference surely is that, in this respect, our faculties, as they develop, correspond more and more perfectly with the standard set by the Supreme Mind whose experience constitutes the universe. Let me remind those who are interested in this fascinating question of the remarkable treatment of it in Canon Kennedy's *Natural Theology and Modern Thought*. There will be found a valuable criticism of certain questions raised by Kant in connection with this subject.

How, then, are we to regard the material world? It is not the sole ultimate reality as Materialism regards it. It is not the obverse of a reality whose

reverse is the world of consciousness, as in the popular theory of psycho-physical parallelism. It is not a mere insubstantial vision, a great subjective illusion.

In contrast to all these, we regard the material world as a great coherent order of things in space and time, with that lower degree of reality which belongs to it in relation to the higher reality of spiritual experience. This higher reality is the more concrete, and therefore contains within itself all of the lower reality which it apprehends. In our case this apprehension is very partial and very interrupted. But there is a great Universal Spiritual Experience which includes the whole realm of Nature within its grasp, and thus it is that the natural world possesses, in its own degree, a reality which makes it independent of the partial experiences which belong to finite beings.

Bergson, in his difficult work *Matière et Mémoire*, elaborates from the psychological side his theory of the relation of mind and matter. Though his methods are wholly different from those which I have followed, and though his results are expressed in a wholly different manner, I venture to think that his doctrine, if I understand it aright, is perfectly harmonious with that which I have laid before you. By most careful physiological and psychological investigation, he shows that images are not stored up in the brain, that memory is not rightly regarded as a function of the brain, that between the full spiritual fact of our conscious experience as presented in the memory which sums up our past and the perception of external objects there is a radical difference, and he admits that these objects of perception are such that they exist only in relation to consciousness. Against Idealism he brings the charge that it has neglected to grasp the practical nature of

perception. According to him, perception is always the detaching, from the totality of things, the possible action of my body upon them. It is a stage in an active process. Thus it is that he explains how all the rest escapes our grasp, although it is of the same nature as that which is perceived.

If this be a correct account of his doctrine, it certainly involves a criticism of the current intellectual idealism, but it is in perfect agreement with the doctrine set forth above. Nay, our doctrine makes it far clearer; for we have seen that it is by abstracting from the fulness of our spiritual experience and fastening attention on the objective element in that experience that we grasp the things in space. That this abstraction takes place in the pursuit of an active aim is probably correct, though it is not clear that activity may not sometimes aim at knowledge.

In appreciation of Berkeley, Bergson acknowledges that "philosophy made a great step forward on the day when Berkeley proved, as against the 'mechanical philosophers,' that the secondary qualities of matter have at least as much reality as the primary qualities."* But when he adds that Berkeley made a mistake "in believing that, for this, it was necessary to place matter within the mind, and make it a pure idea," Bergson does not, I think, come into conflict with that development of Berkeley's doctrine which I have ventured to lay before you. For Bergson holds that perception gives us things in themselves, though only in a partial way, so far as is necessary for action upon them, and he maintains that things are "images" in relation with consciousness — a position which, he asserts, no philosophical doctrine, if it is to be con-

* *Matter and Memory*, English translation, p. ix.

sistent with itself, can escape.* That is, our perception grasps, in their real nature, but imperfectly, fragments of a world of things which are essentially such that they exist only in relation to consciousness. We ask no more.

* *Op. cit.*, Conclusion III., p. 303 *ff.*

CHAPTER IV

GOD AND THE WORLD

In the last lecture we dealt, so far as our space permitted, with the problem of the material world and its relation to our consciousness. Relying entirely on the facts given in experience, we were led to a doctrine having a closer affinity with Berkeley's than with any other, but rejecting his conception of the human mind as a kind of screen upon which a Divine operator throws a succession of images. We were led to the belief that the material world exists in a universal experience in which we, in a partial way, share. We saw that this doctrine is confronted by many difficulties, but that none of the efforts of recent philosophers promised any more hopeful solution.

It is clear from this that the problem of the material world leads on to another and even greater problem—the problem of God.

The question with which we have to deal is, in general, What is the relation of the individual human consciousness to the universal consciousness? Green speaks continually of a "single spiritual principle," a "unifying and self-distinguishing spiritual subject," an "eternal consciousness which reproduces itself in us," and so on. His doctrine is that our consciousness is really a mode or partial manifestation of the universal

consciousness. Or, as his language in many places implies, that a consciousness which is, for itself, eternally complete, unfolds or realizes itself gradually in our experience, thus making our experience. But as this doctrine is founded on the analysis by which we find the operation of a self-conscious subject in all our own experiences, there is no escaping the conclusion that the single spiritual principle, the self-conscious subject or ego, is in every case the same—that is, that the self of man is God. The only alternative, as we have already seen, is to regard the spiritual principle which realizes itself in every man as an abstract order or system of categories, which, just because it is abstract, is capable of indefinite application. In the latter case God is reduced to a mere abstraction: He becomes a law according to which experiences develop. In the former, man loses his personal identity: the self in man is God. Here is the fundamental difficulty. How can we affirm God as the subject of universal experience without denying man? How can man be a sharer in the life of God?

This difficulty has pressed with so much insistency on recent thought, that there has arisen a very widespread scepticism as to the possibility of maintaining a belief in God as Absolute. On all hands we find able thinkers turning to the idea of a limited God. Apart from the schools in which Kantian-Hegelianism of the received type is maintained as an orthodox tradition, this may be said to be the prevailing tendency amongst more recent philosophers. Amongst those who have openly advocated this doctrine of a limited God, or whose tendencies are in that direction, I may mention such distinguished names as those of Mr. F. H. Bradley, William James, Dr. McTaggart, and Dr. Rashdall,

amongst English and American thinkers; the list includes some of the most stimulating minds of our generation. In general it may be said that the tendency of thinkers who belong to the schools which are described by the terms Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Personal Idealism, is towards the conclusion that God must not be identified with the Absolute; that He, like ourselves, must be conceived as dwelling within the all-inclusive universe, and operating upon it under the limitations imposed by its essential nature: that He is a sort of elder brother of all spiritual beings, vaster, wiser, more powerful than they, but not different in the nature of the relation in which He stands towards the sum total of all being.

According to Dr. McTaggart, whose personal idealism (as I think it must be described) is an offshoot of Hegelianism, this is the only possible conception of God. He holds that the conception of an omnipotent God is wholly inconsistent with the existence of pain and evil in the world, and is therefore one which cannot be entertained as corresponding to any reality. On the other hand, a non-omnipotent God can only be, he contends, "a person who fights for the good, and who *may* be victorious." There can be no certainty that He, any more than we ourselves, shall ultimately prevail.

Professor William James, in his Hibbert Lectures, which were published under the title *A Pluralistic Universe*, develops a conception of a limited God which is certainly more inspiring. His doctrine is closely allied to that of Fechner, though the basis of his thought is different. Fechner regarded body and mind as necessarily connected, not only in man, but throughout the whole universe. Just as the body of man is an organism compounded of many organs, so

the soul of man is the combination of all the various consciousnesses which belong to these various organs. So also is there a consciousness of the whole human race formed by the union of all human souls, though each soul in its individuality is unaware of the union. Similarly, according to Fechner, there must be an earth-soul, and a soul in every one of the heavenly bodies ; and all these again compound with all kinds and degrees of souls to form a great universal consciousness. This conception had evidently a great fascination for Professor James. He did not give himself wholly away to it, but it guided his thought. His investigations in the psychology of religion convinced him that there is a great realm of psychic reality with which our experience is subconsciously continuous, and that from it there come to us endless influences and elements. The religious "believer finds that the tenderer parts of his personal life are continuous with a *more* of the same quality which is operative in the universe outside of him." "In a word, the believer is continuous, to his own consciousness, at any rate, with a wider self, from which saving experiences flow in." Those who have had this vision "*know*—that is enough —that we inhabit an invisible spiritual environment from which help comes, our soul being mysteriously one with a larger soul whose instruments we are."*

There is, then, according to James, a superhuman consciousness with which we are in close relationship.

Why, we may well ask, does he not go the whole way and regard this superhuman consciousness as universal? The answer is that James was compelled to abandon this final step by the very same difficulty which leads Dr. McTaggart to deny the possibility of

* *Op. cit.*, chap. viii.

an omnipotent God. If God be regarded as Absolute, what about the pain and evil, the contradictions, of the world? "The only way of escape from all this is to be frankly pluralistic, and assume that the superhuman consciousness, however vast it may be, has itself an external environment, and consequently is finite." "The line of least resistance," he concludes, "then, both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not all-embracing—the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that He is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once. "These," he adds, "I need hardly tell you, are the terms in which common men have usually carried on their active commerce with God."*

Or consider Dr. Rashdall's statement as given in his article in the volume called *Personal Idealism*.

Let me say at once that Dr. Rashdall's doctrine and the process by which he arrives at it appear to me to be among the most valuable contributions to recent thought on this great question. Certainly the extraordinary clearness and conciseness of his statement are beyond praise.

He accepts as conclusive that idealistic proof of the being of God as supreme self or person, which I endeavoured to set before you in my own way in the last lecture. He then passes to the consideration of the problem which must always confront the inquirer when this stage is reached: How are we to conceive the relation between God and human subjects? And here, of course, he finds the doctrine which regards human subjects as parts, or elements, or aspects of the Divine, and therefore in some sense to be identified

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 310, 311.

with the Divine. With reference to this doctrine he points out that, as usually presented, it rests upon the fallacy of regarding human persons as knowing subjects when considered in relation to their own experience, and as objects known when considered in relation to the Divine subject. To regard a subject as an object does not bring his intrinsic nature within the experience of another subject. For himself—that is, as he essentially is—he remains independent. It is this very fact which constitutes the distinction between a person and a thing. The thing is as it is known, or capable of being known; the person is as he knows. Or, to use the language more commonly employed in this connection, the thing exists for a knowing subject, the knowing subject exists for himself. That is the fundamental fact of all experience.

Dr. Rashdall is therefore driven to regard the universe as consisting of God, the Supreme, but not all-inclusive Spirit, and a multitude of finite spirits who possess a limited independence by which the independence of the Deity is also limited. But these finite spirits are not regarded as eternal or self-existent: they owe their origin to the will of God. The limitation of God by these finite spirits is not therefore a condition imposed upon the Deity by some power not His own. It is a self-limitation, adopted with a view to the accomplishment of a supreme beneficent purpose.

It adds great persuasiveness to this doctrine that it leaves room for the freedom of the human will and for the imperfection and evil which we find in the world. It is also very closely in harmony with the ordinary thoughts and convictions of religious people. Here we find a development of idealist doctrine which may be

contemplated by the mind of the average Christian with deep satisfaction.

The philosophic critic will, however, be inclined to call this doctrine a form of pluralism—of the doctrine, that is, which holds that the universe consists of a multitude of spirits. To this, however, Dr. Rashdall demurs. He holds that the manifoldness, the limitations and imperfections, of the world are, in his view, not of the essence of things: they have arisen through the self-limitation of the Supreme. The one mind and will has given rise to the many that, through their interaction with himself, there may result, in spite of the emergence of evils which have to be overcome, a best, an ultimate supreme blessing, which would otherwise be impossible. There is a ring of good old orthodoxy about this which will satisfy many minds that metaphysics are not altogether waste of time.

All such theories as those which I have described—in fact, all theories which hold that God is limited—force upon us the question, How then are we to think of the whole, the all-inclusive totality of being?

I think it is possible to present briefly to our minds the various answers which can be given to this question. And I think that all possible answers must (on the hypothesis of a limited God) come in the end to one or other of two views of the universe: either the universe is a heterogeneous multiplicity, or it is an assemblage of conscious selves. In the former case we must think of the whole multitude of conscious beings, whether sharing a common life (as in James's view) or not, as having to deal with an environment or material of some sort, which is, partially at all events, alien and intractable. In the latter case we think of the universe as consisting of a multitude of conscious

selves, which by their mutual interaction create the world that we know in our experience. Here surely are the two forms which Pluralism can assume.

We have seen that the difficulty which in every case drives thinking men to pluralistic doctrines is the great problem which comes to light in relation to our mental life as contradiction and in relation to our moral life as evil. This is so in the three typical cases which I have mentioned. It is so with Dr. McTaggart, with Professor James, and with Dr. Rashdall. There is an element in the universe which cannot be brought within any coherent scheme of thought, which cannot be made consistent with the idea of a universe ordered by perfect power and wisdom. How can such a fact be accounted for? In one or other of two ways: either the Supreme power is working under limitations imposed upon Him by an intractable environment—working, that is, under conditions which He cannot, or does not, wholly control; and therefore His best endeavours produce a result which is less perfect than would be produced were His will quite unfettered: or He is dealing with a multitude of other wills which, by their freedom, limit His power. In the latter case, the supposition that the freedom of these wills is itself due to the Divine Will, and has been created with a view to the realization of a higher purpose—a purpose which apart from that freedom would have been impossible—is that of Dr. Rashdall, and is the view commonly accepted by thoughtful Christian people. God desires, as we say, the willing, loving service of children, not the mechanical obedience of unthinking clockwork; and in making a willing service possible, He inevitably made disobedience possible also.

In either case we are led to Leibnitz' conception of

this world as the best of all possible worlds—not necessarily good, but the best that could be had. We are also led to the Christian idea of a supreme Divine purpose overcoming the evil and bringing in the good —a great agelong moral conquest of all that opposes a final blessedness.

It is extremely interesting to see these great ideas, which are consecrated by the meditations and devotions of many centuries, arising afresh out of the Kantian-Hegelian discussion of reality.

According to Dr. Rashdall, "philosophers have imposed upon themselves and others by the trick of simply assuming (without proof) an identity between God and the philosophical 'Absolute,' and then arguing that if any of the attributes ascribed by theology or religion or common sense to God are inconsistent with what is implied in the conception of 'the Absolute,' no such being as the God of religion can exist." "Personality," he adds, "is undoubtedly inconsistent with the idea of the Absolute or Infinite Being, and therefore it is assumed that God is not personal." "The arguments of Idealism," he goes on, "really, as it seems to me, go to prove that over and above our souls there does exist such a Being as theologians, except when they have unintelligently aped the language of philosophies not their own, have commonly understood by God. The Absolute, therefore, if we must have a phrase which might well be dispensed with, consists of God and the souls, including, of course, all that God and those souls know or experience."*

It is just here that I think Dr. Rashdall's doctrine is open to criticism. The foundation of his whole

* *Op. cit.*, p. 392.

structure is the argument for the Being of God which is yielded by Idealism. What is that argument? It is just this: The world as we know it exists in our experience, an experience which is essentially the experience of a person or self. Only as involved in such an experience can there be a world to know. If, then, the world that I know is part of a much vaster world which is independent of me, which existed ages before I was born, and the greater portion of which is beyond my ken, it must be because there is an experiencing self indefinitely greater than I who makes this great world possible. What is my relation to that Supreme Self? Do I exist apart from Him and independently of Him? Surely it is obvious that, since the world that I know is part of His world, I, who know it, must in some sense share His life. This is the fact that Dr. Rashdall's doctrine fails to deal with. It was this that Green laboured to express when he spoke of the eternal consciousness reproducing itself in us. We have seen the objections to which all such statements are open. Yet I cannot but think that a doctrine like Dr. Rashdall's, which ignores the nature of the very facts on which it is founded, is open to objection in a manner which is even more serious.

The real question which confronts us is this: How can a world which is one and the same, and which exists only as it is experienced, enter into the experiences of a multitude of distinct subjects? It can only be, surely, because all these subjects, in some way or other, share in one all-embracing conscious life.

It is possible, of course, to deny that the world which all subjects know is one and the same. Then the world, as I know it, becomes a sort of vision, or appearance, that is produced in me in some unaccount-

able manner. In other words, the world is for every man his own private vision—a conclusion which is, in essence, solipsism. It was because he laid himself open to this interpretation that Berkeley was charged with preaching illusion. And, for this reason, there was a certain amount of justice in the charge. No, the only way to escape solipsism is to hold fast to that deliverance of our common experience and our common sense, that the world which we all know is one and the same world, that it is a world of things, glowing with colour, quivering with movement and life, no insubstantial vision, no mere system of abstract primary qualities or thought forms. The vivid reality which I see with my eyes, and hear with my ears, and touch with my hands, is the same in my experience and in yours, though my apprehension of it or yours may be very partial and very intermittent.

There is the fact on which all our constructions must be based. And, so far as I can see, the only possible interpretation of it is that the Universal Spirit which gives being to this great world of things in time and space is, in some way, or in some sense, for us an all-enveloping life, a supreme, all-inclusive experience in whom all we lesser beings live and move and have our experience.

Dr. Rashdall, therefore, seems to me to be much mistaken when he writes: "Philosophers have imposed upon themselves and others by the trick of simply assuming (without proof) an identity between God and the philosophical Absolute." If we argue from the nature of our experience of the world, and from our inevitable belief as to the reality, for ourselves and for everybody, of that world as known in our experience, we must regard the spirit which gives being to Nature

as the Universal Spirit in whose all-embracing life we share. That is, we must identify God and the Absolute.

Further light is, I think, thrown on this great problem by considering the nature of the human self as known in our experience in relation to other selves and their experiences. But before we proceed to that consideration, we must define more accurately the stage of our argument to which we have now attained.

In defiance of Dr. Rashdall's statement that "personality is undoubtedly inconsistent with the idea of the Absolute or Infinite Being," we have arrived at the conclusion that the Universal Spirit, whose Being gives reality to the objective world which we know in our experience, is most certainly personal. That is, we believe, on the basis of the idealistic argument, in the personality of God, while holding at the same time that He is universal, all-inclusive, in relation both to ourselves and to the world. It is this last statement which Dr. Rashdall denies. Let us consider the reason of his denial.

With great clearness, in the article already mentioned, Dr. Rashdall sets forth the essential characteristics of personality. First, it implies consciousness. Secondly, permanence: the self-conscious subject brings into relation with one another the experiences of diverse moments. It is the unifying principle which links experience together and makes it one. Thirdly, the subject, or person, distinguishes itself from the object; and in all experience as we have it, this distinction of subject and object is essential. Fourthly, among the objects which are thus distinguished from the subject are, not only things, but also other subjects "which are not known merely as objects for this person's thought, but as beings which exist for them-

selves." "The consciousness which is personal distinguishes itself from other consciousnesses, and particularly from other persons. Individuality is an essential element in our idea of personality."* Fifthly, "the person is not merely a feeling, but a willing or originating consciousness. The self is conscious of being an ἀρχή—whether in the sense of the Libertarian or in the sense of the Determinist, who believes in 'self-determination,' need not be discussed here."

In addition to these five marks of personality or selfhood, Dr. Rashdall considers other qualities which, he notes, are possessed only in degree by selves, and are, more or less, open to discussion. But here we need not follow him. That which he puts fourth calls for our special consideration. A person in order to be a person must, he thinks, distinguish himself, not merely from objects which we class as things, but from objects which we know are also, for themselves, subjects. This is the individuality of the person; and individuality Dr. Rashdall holds to be an essential of personality. The meaning is that a person can exist only as one of a crowd. If *I* did not distinguish myself from *you*, I could not distinguish myself as self at all; just as I could not distinguish myself as a subject unless I had first the consciousness of myself in relation to some object: that is the doctrine. Is it correct? I do not think it is.

It seems to me that Dr. Rashdall, in common with many other thinkers, is confusing two very different things: the way in which we get to know a truth and the truth itself. I have no doubt that man's consciousness of himself has come to be what it is, not only through his reaction upon the objective world of things,

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 371, 372.

but also through his apprehension of the fact that behind certain experiences of his he must recognize the agency of conscious subjects like himself and his dealing with those subjects. Man certainly learns to know himself by means of his social relationships. But this is a very different assertion from that which makes social relationship to be essential to the very being of personality. Is it true that it is impossible to conceive a person existing otherwise than as one of a multitude? Or, more accurately, when we are working back to personality as the underlying principle which makes experience possible, is it necessary to include social relationship in the experience, so that we could not arrive at the principle of personality unless it were included. Surely not: from any experience at all, whether it includes social relationship or not, we reason back to the uniting agency of the self-conscious subject—that is, to personality. As Lotze showed, the fact that we can appear to ourselves in any way, or that anything can appear to us, presupposes the unity of the self.

Two considerations bear out this view. First, it is generally admitted that if anyone dares to adopt solipsism as his philosophical creed, and maintain that he himself and his experience constitute the universe, it is impossible to overthrow him by argument. His position is unassailable. Secondly, the self of another person can, as Dr. Rashdall admits, never become an object of direct knowledge to me. Its essential nature is that it exists for itself. As such it is always inaccessible to every other self. Only as the supposed ground of certain elements and changes in my experience can it become an object of my thought. In this way I credit it with a spontaneity like my own. In

all my thought-processes and conscious apprehensions the ultimate unity is my self; and within the whole realm of my experience it is the one reality which exists for itself. Hence no other beings which exist for themselves can enter into my experience in their true nature in order to give rise by contrast to my self as being for self. The being for self of which I am conscious is, in fact, posited by contrast with the not-self. Only as an x, to which I attribute like nature with myself, but whose nature I do not directly apprehend, does the self of another person exist for me.

Yet it is true, as we all know, that only in social relationship can a properly human life be lived. As a social being man has come into possession of all his spiritual powers, and only as a social being can his deeper needs be satisfied. He cannot realize himself as a human being unless in relation to his fellows. By feeling, sympathy, affection, co-operation, we leap across the chasm which separates soul from soul, and build a social life which no effort of the intellect can reduce to a perfectly articulated intelligible whole. In this social life the individual self takes its place as an element, yet it is an element which has always an independent life of its own into which it can withdraw, a sanctuary that no other self can penetrate.

We find, then, in personality an inmost nature which asserts itself against the bonds of that social order in which, so far as our human experience goes, it must always come to itself. This inmost nature is its existing for itself, in contrast to mere things which exist for it. It is because every human soul is ultimately of this nature that the mind of the individual claims its independence as against the whole world. "My mind to me a kingdom is." There I reign, and

there I give judgment in the way which seems to me right. I listen to others. I may say nothing, but I think all the more. "Convince a man against his will, he's of the same opinion still." It is perfectly true that we gain our opinions very largely from others, but they are not ours until we put the stamp of our own private decision upon them. In practice this same ultimate nature of the self appears in the way in which a man can assert himself against the rule or custom of society. The tyrant may destroy a man's body, but he cannot touch the will. When a man has once made up his mind he can face an angry world, and though that world may destroy him and all his works, it can never, for the man himself, reverse his inner decision. "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me," was the utterance of Luther. It was the expression of a spirit which is, for itself, not only unconquerable, but inaccessible.

Now, it is this "for-itself-ness" which is the essence of personality. If we find other characteristics which seem irreconcilable with this, we must conclude that there is some error in our psychology, or that such characteristics are altogether subordinate. Therefore it seems to me that Dr. Rashdall is wrong in denying that personality can belong to the Absolute. If the term Absolute has any meaning at all, if we are to venture to think or reason about the all-inclusive totality, we must regard it as existing for itself. We can think of it in no other way. The Spirit which gives being to the whole universe must, at least, exist for Himself. Probably such a mode of expression is altogether unworthy of so great a subject. But if any expression at all is applicable, this is.

We cannot, however, go so far as to say that this

"for-itself-ness"—this personality, as we understand it—expresses the full nature of the ultimate reality. For personality, as it is in us, has no power to include within its experience a multitude of persons as they are for themselves. We never can think another soul from within. This, as we have seen, is characteristic of our thought. In relation to one another, human persons are in this sense mutually exclusive. But the ultimate reality cannot be of this nature. It must unite in one the diversity of the spiritual universe. Here the pluralist will raise objection. He will say: This is *à priori* philosophizing. I reply that our conclusion here is not merely based on *à priori* principles. It is no mere application of logic to a sphere in which logic is probably powerless. On the contrary, in making this statement we are keeping closely to the teaching of experience. For experience forces us to believe that, on the objective side, one and the same great world of things in space and time integrates all our partial apprehensions of things. Or, to put it otherwise, there is a great universal experience in which we all share. Turning to the subjective side, this implies that the Spirit which gives being to the whole is all-inclusive in relation to the finite spirits which partially grasp the world which He posits.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that, while we must attribute personality to the Supreme, personality as it exists in us is not a sufficient account of His nature. There must be in Him some higher principle of unity.

It seems to me that this is exactly what might be expected from a consideration of man's place in the universe as our common sense reveals it. We are gifted with spiritual powers which lift us above both inanimate nature and the whole series of living beings, other than

ourselves, as we find them in the world about us. But we are certainly not at the summit of being. Confronted with the vast universe, we must confess the limitations of our knowledge and power, our littleness, our feebleness, our inability to grasp and understand the whole of things. It is therefore eminently reasonable to suppose that our powers enable us to grasp in their full nature things which are below us in the scale of being, but fail to give us a complete apprehension of the things which are above us. Now, since we are, as individuals, elements in the social order, each one of us being but one among many, it is probable that the principle which makes possible this whole order must be, to some degree, superior in its nature to any principle of which we are aware.

In the earlier lectures I showed good reason, as it seems to me, to believe that there are degrees of reality. By an analysis of experience, I showed you that by abstraction we can descend the scale, passing from the full concrete reality of our given experience to the world of things in space, and from this to the world of primary qualities with which physical science deals, and from this again to the world of mere geometrical forms, reality thinning out into mere ghostly shadows as we proceed. But suppose that, instead of descending, we ascend. In that case we pass from the more to the less abstract, and come at length to the concrete experience of the self-conscious subject. But does reality stop there? Surely not. At the level of human consciousness we find, if we consider the multitude of thinking individuals, a multiplicity of concrete experiences which, from the point of view of any one individual, are incapable of combination in a harmonious whole, but which, in practice, form a great social order in

which every individual is an element. Surely the only reasonable explanation is that, though we cannot follow it, the scale of reality rises another step to a level on which—and for the world-embracing point of view which must, most certainly, be there—all that seems disconnected and discordant at the lower level is combined in a unity of higher order. And just as the concrete reality of experience takes up completely into itself the lower stages of reality, so this highest of all takes up all experiences. It is the most real and the most concrete.

How can this superior degree of reality be described? It cannot, I think, be fully described by the term "personality," for, as we have seen, personality is unequal to the task of effecting a final unification amongst all conscious subjects. It was for this very reason that we found it necessary to believe in a higher principle of unity. This supreme principle must, then, be described as superpersonal. But it is not for that reason lacking in personality. On the contrary, for that very reason, it is personal. For consider the analogy of the lower degrees: man as spiritual is above the material world, yet is man material as well as spiritual. So, we conclude, must the highest superpersonal reality be personal also.

It is possible to go even further. Analogy would lead to the conclusion that, in this higher unity, the principle of personality is realized in its highest perfection. Consider personality in relation to the material order. As we have just said, man is material as well as spiritual. But that is not all. The material world reaches its highest development in connection with personality. In the human organism, and especially in the human brain, the organization of matter attains

to a complexity and a perfection which are unparalleled elsewhere. It is surely a just inference that, if there be a higher reality—a condition of being in which personality is subordinate to some higher unifying principle—then, in that reality, personality reaches a perfection which is far beyond anything in our experience.

It is very noteworthy that all religious experience agrees with the doctrine which I have endeavoured to set forth. We have seen that, in relation to one another, finite persons are mutually exclusive. The self as it is for itself—the self, that is, in its own intrinsic nature—can never become an object of knowledge to another self. You can never know me—I can never know you—*from within*. I cannot see with your eyes, or hear with your ears, or think your thoughts as you think them. But religious experience is always pervaded by the conviction that this exclusiveness of the self does not hold in the relation between man and God. We cannot help thinking of God as one who knows us from within. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. . . . There is not a word in my tongue but lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." That is the authentic language of religious experience. Again, it is the conviction that God is the searcher of hearts which enables a man to examine his own moral consciousness with most perfect sincerity. When he feels that even the secrets which he desires to hide from himself are "naked and laid open before the eyes" of God, he becomes honest with himself. This is the experience of every true penitent. While the moral value of this experience cannot be questioned, its value

in other respects may easily be overlooked. Professor W. James helped us to realize the psychological importance of religious experience. His researches were, however, mainly directed to the examination of the evidences of the power of religion to produce moral change. He has been followed by a number of students of the facts and experiences which are grouped under the name of Mysticism. To these writers the experiences of the mystics constitute a proof of the reality of the communion of devout souls with God, and therefore a proof from experience of God's being and character. Both James's doctrine that our consciousness is continuous with a larger consciousness from which spiritual help comes to us, and the experiences of the mystics, testify to the essential importance of the inner relation of the soul to God. If religious experience is to have any value at all for philosophy, this inwardness of relationship with the Divine must be regarded as its principal deliverance.

It is necessary to be quite clear that, logically, the statement at which we have now arrived involves contradiction. Let this fact be distinctly set forth. The essence of personality is its "for-itself-ness." On this account we hold that persons mutually exclude one another. It is impossible, that is, for a person to think other persons in their true nature as they exist for themselves; for, in thought, the object exists for the subject, not for itself. When we think a subject, he is for us an object, and therefore lacks in our thought the essential personal quality of "for-itself-ness," while for himself he possesses it. This is the philosophical statement of the common experience that we can never get inside the mind of another. Here theory and experience are in complete accord and

justify one another. But we cannot hold that this limitation belongs to God ; therefore we have concluded He must be superpersonal—higher in His nature than we are, knowing us from within and including our whole being as we are in ourselves within His being.

Yet we have said that we must think of God in terms of "for-itself-ness"—that is, in terms of personality. This is perfectly true. Further, we proceeded to show reason for believing that personality as it is in Him reaches a higher perfection than in us. As matter reaches its highest perfection when it is taken up into closest association with personal mind, so we must expect that personal mind reaches its highest perfection when entering into relation with an order of things which is higher than itself—that is, we regard "for-itself-ness" as it exists in God as something more than personality, though it is for us the very essence of personality.

The more distinctly this difficulty emerges the better for our purpose. What we are concerned to show is that our experience is such that, while we cannot think with logical consistency above the level of personality as it exists in us, we are driven to believe in an all-uniting highest degree of reality which includes all finite persons within its sphere. It matters little whether we call this highest degree superpersonal or describe it as personality in its highest perfection. Certain it is that, while we recognize it as higher in degree of reality than ourselves, we can think of it only in terms of the personality that we know.

The mutual exclusiveness of persons in relation to one another is not inconsistent with the possibility of their being combined together harmoniously in a single system when taken up into a higher degree of reality.

For, in their own sphere, material things in space—and in that character related to one another—are mutually exclusive. They have the attribute of impenetrability. But as elements in the conscious experience of a person they are not impenetrable, for we have seen that, in conscious experience taken as a whole, the elements interpenetrate. My apprehension of the material world is penetrated through and through by feeling, thought, and purpose. So, surely, it is possible that, in that highest reality which we may call the Divine Experience, the finite persons which, on the level of their own proper existence, stand apart, mutually impenetrable, combine harmoniously in the unity which belongs to that Supreme Being. We cannot grasp this ultimate harmony because, as finite beings, we live on a lower level. Hence the inevitable contradiction.

To the whole scheme of thought which I have presented to you, one very serious objection is sure to be made. It will be said that to identify God with a higher reality which is all-inclusive in relation both to the material world and to the whole multitude of finite persons is to adopt a doctrine which cannot be kept clear of Pantheism. What is this, it will be said, but an identification of God with the universe.

I think I can show that this is a misapprehension. First, the world is no more to be identified with God than my objective experience is to be identified with me. There is a sense in which I am inclusive of the world of things so far as I know it. It is part of my experience. I am the self which makes that whole experience possible. So in relation to the world of material things in the widest sense of the term, God is the Self who makes it possible in all its extent and

in all its detail. Nor is He to be regarded as the Soul of the world, unless I am to be regarded as the soul of the world of my own experience. The term "soul" is, in this connection, inapplicable. It suggests relationship to a bodily organism. But the relation with which we are dealing is not the relation of soul to body, it is the relation of self-conscious subject to experience.

Secondly, our doctrine is not a doctrine of immanence in the ordinary sense. It is not the idea of an indwelling life pervading the universe; it is, rather, a doctrine of transcendence, holding that God, in His full reality, transcends both the world of material things and the world of finite persons. Yet here, again, we must note that the term *transcendence* is not used in its old-fashioned sense. It does not make a comparison between God in His relation to the world and man in his relation to the works of his hands. On the contrary, the transcendence here indicated is that of a higher reality in relation to a lower reality. As the fuller reality of our conscious experience transcends the more abstract reality of the material world, so does God, the highest reality, transcend our conscious experience. And here it must be said that the old distinction between immanence and transcendence needs adjusting to the altered state of philosophic thought. In popular theology, the conception of the immanence of God has certainly proved very valuable. It has helped us to get away from that conception of a transcendent Deity which filled so large a space in the thought of the eighteenth century, and which likened God to a great engineer or architect dealing with given materials —the carpenter theory of creation which Herbert Spencer derided so easily and so effectively. It has

also enabled the popular mind to bring its theology into relation with modern conceptions of evolution. The idea of an indwelling life, unfolding itself throughout the ages, gradually realizing a supreme purpose, harmonized on the one hand with the new scientific thought of the age, and on the other with the philosophic creed which was derived from the school of Hegel. But many of those who rushed eagerly to seize the new idea failed to realize that they were exposing their theology to very serious dangers.

The indwelling Divine life may be compared to that natural life which animates the whole organic series of plants and animals. We trace this natural life ascending from minute beginnings until it reaches its highest development in the spiritual and social existence of man. Here the full spiritual truth of the whole is to be found, not at the beginning, but at the end. On such a theory, it is very easy to believe in Incarnation, because every human being, in his own degree, is an incarnation of the Divine, and the best man is the most Divine thing in the whole universe—unless, indeed, some other planet has turned out a race of intelligent and moral creatures who have done better than we have. It is quite clear that such a view of Divine immanence is not of much value for theology.

If we approach the question from the side of consciousness, and, instead of thinking of the evolution of organic forms, regard the inner life of feeling, conation, thought, which gradually comes to light in the course of development, it may seem more hopeful. In all such inner life, it may be said, and no doubt truly, we trace a movement which finds its explanation and realization in the self-conscious experience of humanity. The whole process must be regarded as

the working out of an immanent self-consciousness. Here, it will be said, is Divine immanence. But it is not clear that anything has been gained by this appeal from the outer manifestations of life to the inner. It is still true that the Divine is to be found, not at the beginning, but at the end; and it is also still true that the most Divine thing in the whole universe is the best of finite intelligences.

Not in these ways can we attain to faith in a great Supreme Spirit guiding, or reigning in, the universe from the beginning. Much less can we find, in such speculations, anything to sustain our belief in a great Father of Spirits.

When we examine the process by which we were led to the thought of God as the universal self-conscious subject who gives reality to the whole physical world, it does not appear that the conception which it yields is best described by the term *immanence*. Can we describe the self of man as immanent in that portion of the physical world which he apprehends in his experience? I do not think we can. Let it be noted that we are not now speaking of the full reality of experience. We are thinking of the self in relation to a part only—that is, to the objective side, which is apprehended when the self abstracts all that peculiarly belongs to itself. It would be much truer to say of the self that it is transcendent in relation to the physical world, for it is certainly higher in the scale of reality. That being so, it seems to me that as God is higher still in the scale of reality, we must regard Him as transcendent, in this special sense, in relation both to the physical world and also to the whole multitude of finite spirits.

I do not pretend that these brief statements are at

all adequate as a treatment of the great question of immanence and transcendence. They amount merely to an indication of the direction in which, as it seems to me, we must look for a solution. We shall find it necessary to return to this subject when we come to consider the idea of evolution in connection with the philosophy of will. It is to that branch of our discussion that it more properly belongs.

Under that heading, also, we must consider the bearing of the problem of evil upon the doctrine which I have endeavoured to set forth. As we have seen, it is this problem most of all which compels philosophers in so many cases to hold that the only possible conception of God is that which regards Him as limited, and as, therefore, not the Absolute Being. This much, however, is now clear: If, as we have seen reason to believe, God is above man in the scale of reality, we must believe that contradictions and difficulties which cannot be resolved on our level are merged in the higher unity of His Being.

Before leaving the subject of this lecture, I must revert to Dr. McTaggart's views as briefly stated above. He holds that only as one among many, only as a sort of elder brother of all finite spirits, can we believe in the possibility of God. The reason which drives him to this conclusion is that which I have mentioned already. He thinks that the sin and pain of the world prove that an omnipotent God does not rule in the universe. "It seems to me," he writes, "that when believers in God save His goodness by saying that He is not really omnipotent, they are taking the best course open to them, since both the personality and the goodness of God present much fewer difficulties if He is not conceived as omnipotent. But then they

must accept the consequences of their choice, and realize that the efforts of a non-omnipotent God in favour of good may, for anything they have yet shown, be doomed to almost total defeat."* "The fundamental conditions of the universe may prevent it from being anything but very bad, and all that God's utmost efforts may be able to do is to make the inevitable calamity a little less calamitous."† But Dr. McTaggart does not hold the doleful creed which he thus describes. He does not think there is evidence to prove the existence of a God of any kind. His conception of the universe is that it consists of a system of finite selves. It is, he holds, because these selves form a system that there is order in the universe. It is this system which makes the universe to be a universe, and it is itself the ultimate fact—the final reality. This seems to me to be Pluralism with a vengeance, though Dr. McTaggart professes to be an idealist and a disciple of Hegel. According to this doctrine, souls form a system. "But," as Dr. Rashdall well asks, "a system for whom? The idea of a system which is not 'for' any mind at all is not open to an idealist, and the idea of a world each part of which is known to some mind but is not known as a whole to any one mind is almost equally difficult."‡ Dr. McTaggart's doctrine, in fact, either destroys the world as a reality independent of every finite spirit, or it assumes that there can be relations without a relating intelligence. The world, in his view, is posited by the interrelations of the whole multitude of finite spirits. But how are these relations possible if there is no mind which grasps the system as a whole?

* *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 219. † P. 260.

‡ *Op. cit.*, p. 393 note.

CHAPTER V

FREEDOM

Is there anything fresh to be said on this old and well-worn theme? Philosophers and theologians have been toiling at it through all the centuries of speculation. At all times there have been the opposing schools of Libertarians and Necessitarians, neither of which has ever been able to convince or finally confute the other. Refinement has followed refinement, and subtlety has been met with subtlety. Necessity has become Determinism, and liberty has become self-determination, and still the controversy remains. It might, indeed, seem a hopeless task to endeavour to grapple once more with such a problem. But the truth is that there is no question which more urgently demands consideration at present, for there is none which has had so much fresh light thrown upon it in recent times.

The reason of this change is to be found in the immense range of fresh observations which have been yielded by psychology and biology. The problems of life and consciousness have been attracting much attention of late, and have been dealt with both experimentally and by much patient examination of facts. The study of the phenomena of life is absorbing many minds. The result is a growing conviction in many quarters that there is in all forms of life a spontaneity

which cannot be explained by mechanical or chemical principles and processes. The challenge thrown out a few years ago at a meeting of the British Association has met with many vigorous replies, and it is being realized that the old controversy about spontaneous generation is already, from the philosophical point of view, antiquated; that even if it were true that, given certain material conditions, life would always appear, yet the new-born life itself would be, in every case, a thing essentially distinct from the environment of mechanism out of which it sprang.

Again, among psychologists there has been a definite abandonment of the old associationism which treated mental states as if they were connected by causal links like those which bind together antecedents and consequents in the realm of physical forces. As I pointed out in my first lecture, it is now being recognized that our conscious experience is not a mere "thread of consciousness," a mere succession of separate psychic elements. Its amazing complexity and concreteness are being realized. How amazing this complexity and concreteness are I tried to show you.

When discussing this subject we were able to see how inseparably feeling, knowledge, and will are united in our conscious experience. Yet, in spite of the very determined effort which we then made to exhibit the fulness of the reality which our conscious experience possesses, the active side of this reality remained very largely undisplayed. The fact is, there is no capacity in language sufficient for our purpose. When we talk of experience, the tendency of our thought is to regard the experiencing self as a contemplating intelligence rather than as an initiating agent. Yet, in all experience, the self is an initiating

agent. There can be no experience without attention, and attention is an act of will. It is self-direction upon an object. The tendency of recent psychology is to regard this self-direction upon an object as the central characteristic of conscious life. Indeed, some carry this principle far back into the very beginnings of life, and find it, in a rudimentary form, in the more primitive organisms. It is there apparently as an impulse by which the creature impels itself towards conditions of environment which correspond to its needs. This side of the question must be left to those whose studies enable them to deal with it. Here we are concerned with our own experience. That experience, as we have seen, is not a succession of separate events: it is a living, moving *continuum*. But its life and movement are not qualities which the self simply observes: they are inherent in the self: they involve the activity of the self. We stand upon the bank of the river and watch its waters flowing past us. Such is not the relation of the self to the moving *continuum* of its experience. For while the self is certainly the permanent in relation to every changing element in the stream of experience, it is also the inner energy of propulsion which makes the stream to flow. Such images may help us to realize the nature of the facts. Yet we have to be on our guard against the dangers of misapprehension which they involve. It is because the facts are so close to us that we fail to see them clearly. They form, indeed, our very life. Examine that life from within, and it will become evident that knowledge, feeling, and will, are but abstracted elements of a single activity which is central in experience and formative of it, and which constitutes the characteristic nature of the self.

It may be truly said that it is the appreciation of this truth which marks most notably the principal developments of philosophy in recent times. Upon this, so far as I know, the most effective thinkers of our day are agreed. Here, it is recognized, is reality as it is given to us.

The thinker who has most fully grasped this truth, and whose philosophy is wholly founded upon it, is Henri Bergson. With him it becomes a new doctrine of *time*. He distinguishes between time in the full reality of its nature and time as set out in lengths and measured by reference to spatial standards. Time in the former sense he calls *Duration*. It is the very essence of that becoming which is given in conscious experience. Time in the latter sense is valid only in relation to the abstract spatial world.

A good way of presenting this distinction to our minds is to consider what we mean when we say, for example, "I have time to catch the train." In this case, as in all such cases, the word "time" expresses the relation between one set of material and spatial movements and another. Only in this way does time become capable of quantitative measurement. This is phenomenal, not real, time.

It would be impossible here and now to enter upon a discussion of Bergson's doctrine of time. Nor is it necessary. We are concerned with Free-will and Necessity. Bergson's treatment of this subject is one of the most remarkable and valuable discussions of it in all its great literature. It is the theme of the earliest of his larger works, the *Essai sur les Données*. There he works out his doctrine of time, and applies it to the question of Freedom. For this reason I mention that doctrine in this place. Yet, in my belief,

the principle of Bergson's confutation of Determinism and of his justification of Freedom can be made clear without asking you to follow him in his examination of time and in his application of the results of that examination to the process of the will. In general his criticism of Determinism is that it is a confusion between time and space. It is an effort to apply spatial categories to a process which is by your leave. It is clear that such a statement as this requires, for its justification, a detailed examination of the arguments of the Deterministes. Those who desire this will find it in the *Essai sur les Données*.

We can, however, get hold of the principle in the terms of our own investigation. We have seen that the concrete whole of our conscious experience is for us the fulness of reality as it is given to us. We have also seen that this whole is a living, moving continuum of which the inner principle is the activity of the self —an activity which is essentially self-direction. Analyzed, this self-directing activity is found to contain knowledge, feeling and will. Of these clearly will most fully corresponds to the nature of the whole activity; for will is, in essence, the self directing itself towards an end. Hence, we conclude, will is essentially the characteristic activity of the whole self. Will, that is, is the formative principle of experience when experience is regarded as a concrete whole.

We must consider the doctrine of Necessity more particularly. What is that doctrine? In a vague general way it is a mode of thought familiar to every mind, no matter how unaccustomed to philosophy. In every age it assumes a form corresponding to the views of the time. While never consciously held by anyone, it appeals in some shape to everyone. None can

wholly escape its influence. To some minds and in some situations it appears as an invigorating truth, to others as a doctrine of despair. For some it is a creed, for others a denial of all creeds. Its general principle may be expressed in these sentences: All events are so determined that they must be as they are and can be no otherwise; everything that happens is settled beforehand; there is an inevitable tendency in things which makes them to be as they are; against that tendency no power of mind or will can effect anything; though the will of man seems independent, it is but working out a destiny which is unavoidable.

Fate as a supreme power or ultimate order of things is a conception which springs into fresh life with every generation. To the ancients, it appeared as a power to which even the gods were subject; to the moderns, as the necessary working out of natural law. At times the sense of an inherent necessity in the course of events comes upon the soul of man with crushing weight. Every great literature bears the impress of this burden. Here tragedy has found the most effective means of stirring the heart with deep emotions. The struggle of a lofty soul against an impending inevitable doom has ever provided art with the noblest themes.

In theological thought this necessity assumes another shape—it is identified with the will of God. Hence the conception of irrevocable Divine decrees. All things are ordered and settled from the beginning. In the more extreme forms of this doctrine, even the seemingly wayward thoughts and imaginations of man's heart and all his doings are parts of a plan which has been arranged from all eternity. Some are preordained to goodness and joy, others to sin and suffering. By

such means do the eternal wisdom and power work out their great designs.

Theologians have struggled to escape the moral consequences of this doctrine, and struggled in vain. Logically, when once the principle of the preordination of events is admitted, there is no escaping the conclusion that the whole of human life is settled beforehand. God is the author of evil as well as of good.

Attempts have been made to distinguish between the foreknowledge of God and the preordination of all events. God as omniscient, it is said, must be aware beforehand of all that ever comes to pass. He knows all human characters perfectly, and is therefore able to foretell all that they will do; but He is not therefore the author of their actions. For these actions they are themselves responsible.

Yet it must be admitted that if actions are the inevitable outcome of a man's character and circumstances, and if character and circumstances are of such a nature that a mind of sufficient power can tell beforehand exactly how the relations between them will work out, and if that mind has itself designed and determined the original elements out of which all characters and circumstances have arisen, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Creator is Himself the author of all that has followed upon His original creative activity.

The force of this conclusion has been very strongly felt by recent theology. The old controversies about predestination and election have vanished. The doctrine of Free-will has been accepted as practically essential to Christian faith. Belief in necessity, even in the more refined forms of Determinism, has

become, as a rule, the mark of a sceptical attitude towards the fundamental doctrines of religion. An interesting illustration of the change was given at a Conference of Calvinistic Churches held a few years ago in Switzerland, when it was found that one of the few points on which there was a general agreement was the abandonment of the doctrine of the Divine Decrees, the corner-stone of the doctrinal structure of the original Calvinistic theology.

To return from the theological side of this question to its more general philosophical discussion, it may be laid down that if the whole series of events which forms the history of the universe is of such a character as to be definitely knowable beforehand to a mind of sufficient intelligence, it is impossible to deny the doctrine of Necessity. The ancient conception of Fate usually meant something more than this. It implied, as a rule, the thought of some inner compulsion forcing a man to act in a certain way, and not in other ways.

As an artistic conception this view of Fate has never wholly lost its power. And, in recent times, it has regained a great part of its ancient impressiveness through the biological investigation of heredity. The tendencies which a man inherits from his ancestors may be so strong as to dominate his life. Against their influence no determination of the will or benefit of favouring circumstances seems to be efficacious for deliverance. Here Ibsen found inspiration for his tragic genius. And no art could fully display the greatness of the tragedy revealed in the dry records of subnormal pedigrees.

The study of eugenics has brought to light an enormous volume of facts proving the persistency of

racial characteristics good and bad, and showing how fatal for the race is the propagation and multiplication of inferior or degraded types. Further, it has been shown that, under the laws of inheritance discovered by Mendel, it is possible to predict the order in which certain variations of racial type will take place. When a sufficient number of observations has been made, it can be foretold that, in certain circumstances, a definite proportion of the offspring in a particular case will possess some marked characteristic. An extreme instance is the proved fact that the child of two feeble-minded parents is never possessed of normal faculties. Every union of this nature, if it be fruitful, is absolutely predetermined to produce offspring who are unfitted for the responsibilities of life. Here, it may be thought, is Fate in its most inexorable form, and revealed by scientific demonstration.

A deeper consideration will show that this is a misunderstanding. It is certainly true that a man may be fated, in the sense of predetermined, to the possession of certain inherent tendencies or limitations. He may be so feeble-minded as to be unable to grasp the ordinary rules and responsibilities of normal human life. He may be so deficient in that power of inhibition which we call self-control as to be unable to master his impulses to the degree which is necessary for every member of ordinary human society. But these deficiencies do not imply that every action is absolutely determined beforehand so as to be calculable by a mind of sufficient power. They may have the opposite effect. It is easier to tell beforehand, in many cases, the action of a man upon whose wisdom and goodness you depend, than to foretell the conduct of a homicidal maniac.

The truth is that the inheritance of characteristics and tendencies does not involve the predetermination of the details of conduct. What it does involve is a limitation of the sphere within which freedom can operate. A feeble-minded person may not be able to follow a demonstration in Euclid, and in that case no effort of his will can enable him to do so, but he may have wit enough to know that bread will satisfy his hunger and will enough to accept or refuse it when offered. A homicidal maniac may be habitually subject to the impulse to commit murder whenever he sees another man, but he may at the same time have will enough to refrain in many cases.

No reasonable person claims that there are no limits to human freedom. Such limits exist in every case. Characteristics and tendencies, good and bad, of some sort or other, belong to every man, and always involve limitations or conditions of the freedom which the man possesses. They mark out the lines within which his self-determination can exercise itself. They do not in any instance imply that his actions are all determined beforehand.

The doctrine of Fate, whether regarded as an external compulsion or an internal necessity, is therefore not involved in the modern scientific doctrine of heredity. At the same time, there can be no doubt that there is sufficient basis for all that tragic art really demands. The fact that influences from the past of the race can shut a soul up in a prison-house of circumstances of such a nature that a noble human life is impossible, or that base or brutal desires are, for him, inevitable, is a fact so terrible that no art can exaggerate its awfulness. In this sense Fate is indeed a fact.

In discussing this question, we have so far assumed

that will, in its normal exercise, possesses a freedom of its own. This assumption must now be justified. Let us consider how. The doctrine of Necessity may, I think, be fully stated as assuming one of three forms.

First, it may be purely materialistic, regarding all action as physically determined; the mental side, of which we are conscious, being merely epiphenomenal. Man is a mechanical automaton: his mind is a phosphorescence which plays over, but does not influence, his movements. In the first lecture we showed that this doctrine is impossible. It is unnecessary to repeat the refutation here.

Secondly, the doctrine of Necessity may be based on the old associationist psychology. According to this, ideas are connected together by a relation of cause and effect. When two ideas have been associated in experience, the recurrence of one will excite the other. The essence of this doctrine is that it transfers the activity from the self to the ideas which the self experiences. A man runs from a mad dog because the idea of a mad dog is associated in his mind with the idea of danger. But suppose he sees the dog about to bite his wife, and does not run away but goes to her help, it is, on this theory, because the sight of his wife, being associated with feelings still stronger than fear for his personal safety, overcomes his terror. In every case the strongest feeling as evoked by association determines the man's conduct. That is the theory.

I have already said that this psychology is now almost universally discredited. Yet it must be admitted that in a case like that just described it is very plausible. Also it is true that there are cases in which action is simply reaction upon a stimulus.

Just as there are natural actions, such as the blinking of the eyelids, which occur whenever the appropriate stimulus is applied, so there are actions in which the the stimulus involves ideas and the feelings associated with them, and yet the full determination of the self is not exercised. So it is that a swordsman parries the thrust of his adversary. The thrust, the image of it, the association of that image with the part of his own body which has to be guarded, and the corresponding movement by which the guard is effected: all these things follow one another by a kind of physico-psychic mechanism which acts automatically. No one denies this. It belongs to the very nature of habit. But in all this there is no intervention of the concrete will. All is abstract. It is abstraction in action. That is, it is a subordinate department of the full conscious life.

Consider the swordsman engaged in conflict. His will is undoubtedly at work. His whole personality is concentrated upon one end. And the act of will which determined this concentration employs—indeed takes up into itself—all the mechanisms of nerve, muscle, habit, association, and so on, which are necessary for the attainment of its end. All these mechanisms taken by themselves are mere abstractions. The concrete experience, which, from within, is called "will," and on the outer side, "action," includes them all. To isolate any one of these elements and make it the determinant of the whole in which it is an element, is like making the circular form of a wheel the cause of its rotation.

To recur to our illustration of the mad dog: it is not merely because his feeling for his wife is stronger than his fear of the dog that the man goes to her

help; it is because the sight of his wife has recalled him to himself, as we most justly say, and made him determine that, no matter what the danger, he will do what he ought. That this is so may be seen by substituting for the wife of his bosom the neighbour who slandered him. The truth is that the two situations, the running from the dog in the first instance, and the running to the help of another in the second, are not comparable. The running out of danger is instinctive: the man is not in full possession of himself. The running to the help of another is a moral act—an act in which the man identifies himself with an end to be accomplished. This latter is self-determination.

There is, thirdly, a doctrine of Determinism which is much more subtle and difficult to deal with. According to it a man's reaction upon circumstances is determined by his character. The most complete and powerful statement of this doctrine which recent philosophy has produced is to be found in Dr. McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion*. This is all the more valuable because Dr. McTaggart is an idealist who traces his intellectual pedigree from Hegel and Kant. He defines Determinism as the doctrine that "the volitions of each man spring from his character, and are the inevitable result of that character when it finds itself in a certain situation."* As between Determinism and the opposite doctrine of Indeterminism, Dr. McTaggart states the controversy to be concerned with the completeness or incompleteness of the determination of choice. The Indeterminist holds that "a man is free in any action if his choice of that action is not completely determined. The supporters of this view do not, I conceive," writes Dr. McTaggart,

* *Op. cit.*, chap. v., § 147.

"maintain that a man can ever act without a motive, nor do they consider that the existence of a motive is incompatible with freedom. But if the motive completely determined the act—either because there was no other motive, or because it was determined to be more effective than any other—then the act would not be freely done. It is essential for freedom that there should be motives prompting to different courses between which the agent chooses; and it is essential that this choice should not be determined. We may call this freedom of indetermination." This, according to Dr. McTaggart, is quite correctly described as Free-will.

But Dr. McTaggart does not believe that it exists. Against it he urges a most able and effective polemic, and the most powerful part of his argument is that in which he shows that our moral judgment upon actions is essentially a judgment upon character. It is because action is the expression of character that we approve the good and condemn the wicked. If a volition is "a perfectly undetermined choice between two motives." how are we to pass from the volition to the man who makes it? "The whole fabric of morality would be upset if our approval or condemnation of a man for his volition had no right to last longer than the volition itself." Nero would be blameless in the intervals between his murders. On the contrary, "the approval or condemnation of the agent is based on the belief that the character indicated by the past acts survives in the present, and is ready, on appropriate occasions, to manifest itself in similar acts. Nero is condemned in the present because he still has the character which will probably cause him, when he is tired of eating, to amuse himself with another murder."*

* *Loc. cit.*, §§ 146, 147.

This argument carries conviction to every reasonable mind. If freedom is to mean indetermination in the sense that volition is not the expression of character—in the sense, to use Dr. McTaggart's words, of being a "perfectly undetermined choice between motives"—then it is impossible to believe in freedom. Such freedom would most certainly destroy all consistency, and cut away the foundations of moral judgment and moral discipline. But the more enlightened defenders of free-will at the present time do not advocate a doctrine of this kind, and it is strange that a thinker so competent as Dr. McTaggart, and writing as recently as 1906, did not think it necessary to consider the doctrine of Bergson and other writers of note whose views are in substantial agreement with his.

It is the very essence of the more recent statements of the doctrine of Free-will that freedom does not consist in indetermination as between competing motives, but that it is the very nature of motived action. Even as far back as T. H. Green we find a most able presentation of the doctrine that man is free because he acts in accordance with motives; that the motive is not to be confounded with any of the crude desires which press upon a man in a moment of decision. The motive is, in fact, the man identifying himself with some one aim, and so making that aim the full expression of himself. But this doctrine certainly requires further explanation if the completeness of its vindication of freedom is to be grasped.

Determinism is the doctrine that volition is the inevitable expression of character reacting upon circumstances. I ask no more as the foundation of a doctrine of Freedom. For what is Character? and what are Circumstances? First, as to Character, it

is another name for the man himself. It is the Self regarded as continuous and dynamic. It is not a set of fixed dispositions. It is the man as possessing certain dispositions or tendencies, not dispositions or tendencies as making the man. Character is always in the making. This making is the ceaseless movement of that growing experience which we considered in our first lecture, and the inner force of this ceaseless movement is that activity which, as active, we term Will. Self-direction is the essential quality of this activity.

Secondly, consider circumstances. We are apt to think of the man in relation to circumstances as though he were a billiard ball driven against certain obstacles —a cushion or another ball—deflected in accordance with certain laws, and so reaching another position. But such a way of thinking omits the fact that circumstances affect a man through the medium of his own consciousness. What circumstances are to me depends upon myself. I make them to be what they are to me.

In will, let it be remembered, we are dealing with the full concrete reality of experience. When considering it, we are endeavouring to grasp the very movement of reality itself. We are seeking to understand that which enfolds both all our understandings and all the things that we understand. By the continuous activity of conscious will is shaped the whole world of our experience. Every moment in this movement is, of course, continuous with the preceding moment, but its continuity would be more adequately expressed by the word "spontaneity" than by the word "determination." When Dr. McTaggart and other writers try to fasten us down to the alternative of Determinism or Indeterminism, saying that the act

must be completely determined or not completely determined, they are using a category which has no application to the subject in hand. The idea of determination belongs to the lower levels of reality—to physics—and, it may be admitted, to psychology, in its dealing with abstract psychical processes such as the mechanisms of habit, but has no applicability to the full concrete reality of our conscious experience. All such arguments are an effort to apply the category of *causality* to the whole, where it has no validity. It belongs solely to the articulation of the parts. The principle of cause and effect links together the elements of the lower world—the world of material things—but cannot control the activity of the self. The self is often spoken of as a cause, and it is said that in the self we find the origin of the principle of causation; for here we find that idea of efficiency which underlies our thoughts of causation. I am not here concerned with the way in which we obtain the fundamental categories with which we operate when dealing with the things given in our experience, but it is surely clear that, however we derive our idea of causation, that idea, as applied to physical things, is not applicable to the self. Causation exists only *for* the self. It is a determination of the self, and the self cannot be classed with its own determinations. That which makes causation possible cannot be subject to causation. The doctrine that antecedent and consequent in volition are bound by the same necessity which binds the physical antecedent to its physical consequent in every event in Nature, cannot be admitted. The rule of necessity holds within the physical world. It binds every element to every other element in a vast system. But for that very reason necessity cannot rule the self

which makes this whole system possible. In the last resort, Determinism will always be found to be an effort to subject the self to determination by the not-self, and that is an impossible theory of the will.*

That this view of the nature of the will is gaining ground in philosophy is most remarkably shown by Professor James Ward's treatment of the subject in his more recent work, *The Realm of Ends*. Here Professor Ward develops on independent lines a conception which is practically the same as Bergson's. He shows that the concrete integration of experience is the diametrical opposite to the mechanical production of a result. It is a creative process, and may most fitly be described by the term *Epigenesis*. The idea expressed by this term is that the synthesis is always more than the sum of the parts. And there are reasons for believing that process of this nature is to be found, not merely in the conscious life of man, but in lower forms of life also—that epigenesis is probably involved to some degree in all life.

In the statement which I gave above, I used, for purposes of exposition, a form of expression to which Bergson would demur. I spoke of "moments" preceding or succeeding one another in the movement of our conscious experience. It is certain that we think, and are bound to think, in that way when we reflect upon our experience. But, according to M. Bergson, such reflection gives rise to an illusion which is the cause of all our trouble. There is nothing *atomic* about experience in its own true, full nature. It is essentially continuous. This means, according to M. Bergson, that it is in pure time, real duration.

* See the author's *Short Study of Ethics*, part i., chap. iii.

But, when we reflect upon it, we regard it as in phenomenal time; time, that is, which is set out in successive moments by reference to space. Such moments are regarded as wholly external to one another, as if they were things in space. But, as Bergson shows, if that were their true nature there could be no such thing as movement at all. In fact, as he shows, with a cogency of proof which is, I confess, to me overwhelming, science eliminates duration, it reduces time to space, it sucks out the life of our conscious experience, and so gets a residuum with which it can deal. It is the duty of philosophy, on the other hand, to restore this life, to eliminate space, to get back to pure duration.

We have here the means of correcting what was imperfectly stated in the first lecture. There I said that, by abstracting from the subjective, we gained the world of material things. Now we see that what we really abstract from is, not merely the subjective, but the living movement of our conscious experience. When that is eliminated we are left with the spatial world, the world of mechanical causation, the world in which everything is determined by things and conditions outside itself.

The moment this truth is grasped we see how the difficulty arises, as between Freedom and Determinism. Necessity, or Determinism, in all its forms, is the effort to apply the scientific, or spatial, way of thinking to the full reality of our conscious experience. It is the attempt to measure the concrete by the abstract, the living by the dead.

When Dr. McTaggart speaks of actions being completely or incompletely determined by motives, he is viewing the states of the self as if they were separate

things outside of one another, related as physical things in space are related, and so connected by causal links. On the contrary, as we saw at the beginning, all these states of self interpenetrate one another. The very motives, or desires, which impel us to action and compete, or seem to compete, with one another, far from being separate and determinate agencies, are intermingling elements, each contributing to the whole experience.

There is another, and perhaps simpler, way of putting the same argument. When we speak of actions as determined by motives, regarding these motives as distinct and separable elements in the man's experience, we are applying the logic of intellect in a realm which is outside its proper sphere. An act of will in the true sense is the outcome of the man's full conscious life. It is indeed, in every case, that full conscious life itself. It is therefore not subject to the categories and thought-processes which belong to the mind's dealing with the limited and spatially determined world of our lower abstract experience. The category of causation, as we apply it to the things of that limited experience, and the logical processes by which that category is used for the understanding of these things, are here altogether misleading. The statement of this truth is as old as Kant. But in our time we are able to discern its force with far greater clearness, and to trust to it with far greater confidence. And here Bergson's doctrine of Intuition comes to our help. When dealing with the whole of experience our simple awareness is of greater value than any amount of logic. The sense of spontaneity, the feeling of freedom, the recognition of responsibility for our acts of will, are far more trustworthy guides than all the arguments of the

Determinists. Plain men have always believed this. Bergson has taught us the reason of their confidence.

A man is free, then, in the exercise of his will, when he truly wills, because he is developing the life that is in him, expressing his character, putting forth himself in the way which corresponds to his real being. Language fails here, just as scientific understanding fails. To know the freedom of such action you must live it.

Before we leave this subject we must, however, touch upon another favourite mode of expressing the idea of Determinism. It is said that, if action is the outcome of character, it must be capable of being foretold. An intelligence of sufficient grasp, it is thought, could, from a knowledge of the man's character, foretell accurately how he would act in given circumstances. We all exercise this power in a limited way. We say of one, he will certainly act in such a way. He will, for example, give me a subscription to this good purpose; he is a generous man, and takes an interest in such things. Of another we say, he will not help; he does not care about it, and will not go out of his way to please me or anyone else: and we are very often right in such predictions. If with our very limited ability we are able to forecast the actions of the will of another, surely a mind of sufficient grasp could foretell accurately in every case; a mind which knew the circumstances of every individual as well as his character would be able to foretell every decision ever made and the whole history of the world as accurately as an astronomer can foretell the recurrence of an eclipse. If that be true, how can the will be free? for surely there must be as necessary a connection between circumstances and character on the

one side and action on the other, as there is between the physical cause and its effect?

People who argue in this way fail to consider that they are trusting to an analogy which will not bear examination. The reason why we are able to foretell the actions of others in so many cases is that we compare them with ourselves. We do not calculate their action as the astronomer calculates the movements of the heavenly bodies, or as the chemist foresees what will happen when certain chemicals are combined. We compare freedom with freedom. We judge what we should do ourselves in like circumstances, making allowance for the differences which we know to exist between ourselves and those whose actions we are considering, and taking account of our past experience of their action and the character which it revealed. The knowledge of a person is essentially different from the knowledge of an abstract science, or even from the knowledge of a concrete thing. The real inner nature of a person always remains inaccessible. It is indeed in every case unique and incomparable. And this applies to all acts of will which are the expression of that nature. We never really know such actions. When we say of a man's conduct, "I knew he would do it," we are really referring to the external result. The inner side is unapproachable. There are people on whose goodness we rely. We never find it to fail. Of such we say, "I know that man, therefore I trust him." And usually our confidence is justified. Yet when we endeavour to think out that knowledge, we find that, in the last resort, it is not knowledge at all. It is faith. Consider any individual case—any particular action—and try to grasp it. At once the intellect fails. Behind it lies a whole history. Feel-

ings, thoughts, habits, experiences, are blended into one -one self, one character—and the action is the outcome. No composition of moral forces, no mental chemistry, no psychical calculus, could be relied on to bring this infinitely complex thing within the grasp of any conceivable measurement. We can say with practical certainty that there are certain things that a good man will do, and certain other things that a good man will not do; but to grasp as a whole the psychical facts which are behind any particular action is impossible. Every act of will is intrinsically a unique event.

But, it will be said, suppose for the sake of argument that you could grasp all the facts of a man's inner life, would it not then be possible to foretell exactly how he would act? The answer is that it is impossible to grasp all the facts of a man's inner life, for those facts can exist for no one but the man himself. It is the characteristic of the self that it exists for itself; it is the characteristic of things that they exist for the person who knows them. Therefore things are knowable in their true nature, and selves are not knowable in their true nature to any but themselves. This is what Bergson means when he says that "to know completely the antecedents and conditions of an action is to be actually performing it."* Even with our own actions, when we turn back and reflect upon them, the life has evaporated. We could give no complete account to ourselves of the situation out of which an action sprang. Professor Bergson arrives at his conclusion on this question, not on the philosophical grounds which I have just set forth, but for strictly psychological reasons. The main point in his analysis

* *Op. cit.*, chap. iii., p. 184 *ff.*, in *Time and Free Will.*

is that, in the act of imagining psychic states — especially states of feeling—we lose the *intensity* which is essentially qualitative, and in its place substitute a quantitative symbol which does not correspond to the reality. That quality of feeling which is its intensity is only in our possession while the feeling is being actually felt. When we try by imagination to reproduce it, we do not really reproduce it ; we substitute a wholly different thing for it. Those who desire to study this side of the question further must be referred to M. Bergson's *Essai sur les Données*, where it is discussed at length.*

* Translated under the name *Time and Free Will*. See chap. iii. of that work.

CHAPTER VI

NECESSITY AND EXPERIENCE

THERE is a great saying of Hegel's that "Freedom is the truth of Necessity." It is one of those profound utterances which move upon the chaos of our thoughts and bring order out of confusion. There are some thinkers at present who, in reaction against the dominance of the scientific conception of physical law, are inclined to deny mechanical necessity altogether. As well might one deny the succession of day and night. Every tram-car in our streets, every machine in our factories, every eclipse foretold in our almanacs, affords demonstration that when a uniformity of physical causation has been discovered, the relation of cause and effect so disclosed is absolutely inevitable. The power of prediction is the crowning proof of this fact. Once it has been shown that a particular combination of physical forces will bring about a certain result, experience is decisive that here is a rule which knows no exception. What makes this conclusion perfectly certain is just the fact that if in any particular instance the expected result is not produced, the experimenter always concludes that some uncounted factor has entered into the combination, and so altered the total effect. And his conclusion is always justified. Thus it was that the planet Neptune

was discovered. Thus it was that Argon was revealed. The forces of Nature do not act capriciously. They observe a uniformity of operation which gives rise to an inevitableness which may well be termed Necessity.

But when this fact of physical necessity has been admitted, a further question remains: What is its sphere? When some of our scientific thinkers claim the whole universe of being as the sphere of this mechanical necessity they are going far beyond the evidence. Man's intuitive knowledge of the operations of his own will raises an immediate protest. And now we find the belief extending that in all life there is a principle of spontaneity which is not subject to a purely physical necessity.

Turning back to the investigations which we have pursued in these lectures, we can, I think, clearly discern the meaning of Hegel's great saying. The life of the spirit, conscious experience, is not subject to the necessity which prevails in the lower material world. It cannot be, because, in relation to it, the lower material world is an abstraction. Abstract from the movement of the living conscious reality and there remains the world of things in space. In this lower world every element is linked to every other element by necessary relations, spatial and causal. This necessity is the description of the articulation of the parts throughout the whole domain of this world of inferior reality. Thus it gets its unity as a conceivable world. Thus we are able to think of it and deal with it.

The higher reality, the living, moving *continuum* of our conscious experience, does not conflict with the lower world. It does not contradict it. On the contrary, the higher includes the lower. The freedom

of the spirit demands and posits the necessity of the material. The former determines the whole, the latter determines the interrelation of the parts. Necessity is the servant of freedom, the means by which freedom works out its purposes. If there were no mechanism, freedom would be helpless in its dealing with the world of things. A world of things in which events happened capriciously would be useless as an instrument for the working out of purposes. A free will is a will which aims at ends which it sets before itself. If such ends are to be attained in a world of things, there must be some settled order among the things by which purposes can be accomplished. This settled order is the necessity of the material world. Thus, what freedom wills necessity executes, and the two principles are found to be essentially related. But freedom as belonging to the higher world is the higher, and therefore the more explanatory, principle. It is the truth to which necessity must be traced in order that its meaning and value may be discerned.

This doctrine may raise doubts in your minds. It may appear to you that there is much in life which conflicts with it. Is the free spirit of man really dominant over mechanical necessity? The vast system of the physical world seems to crush man by its immensity. Instead of being master of the material world, man seems very often to be its victim. You think how, one by one, men slip from the raft of human existence, and in spite of hands uplifted to heaven, are overwhelmed in the flood. Man struggles to maintain himself in security and comfort by mastering natural forces, and, for a time, all seems to go well with him; but, sooner or later, those pitiless powers close in upon him and he disappears, swallowed up

in the great universe. With every generation comes the fresh hope, and with every generation the fresh despair.

Further, scientific examination of the world shows that the regularity with which the forces of Nature act is often the most terrible and menacing thing about them. The force of gravitation will act in its own way and slay us without pity. The lightning stroke will follow the path marked out for it by the medium through which it passes, altogether unaffected by moral considerations. The earthquake will slay its thousands without pausing to consider whether they are good or bad. So it seems.

Hence it would seem to follow that if there is intelligence in the physical universe, it is there in the sense in which intelligence may be said to pervade a machine, and not as intelligence belongs to a sensitive human soul. The God who seemed to shine forth from the universe has disappeared, and cold mechanical necessity has taken his place. Here is the experience which has brought a chill—the chill of unbelief—to many a heart.

Now, it is certainly true that man, being possessed of a material body, and in that way, and on that side of his being, entering into the realm of physical forces, must, in all the relations of that body to the surrounding material world, be subject to the laws of that world. But it is also true that the sense of being an alien in the universe, of being a sensitive spiritual thing threatened, and finally crushed, by a gigantic unfeeling machine, is a condition of mind which has been created and fostered by a one-sided, and very modern, way of thinking. It is almost entirely due to an imperfect apprehension of the meaning and nature

of physical science. The glorious career of physical science has overawed the thought of the age. We are so impressed by its splendid triumphs that we take its working principles for the expression of ultimate truth. And we have failed to realize that we are apt to regard the theoretical side of science as the whole.

Science may be said to consist of two parts. There is, first, the discovery of the laws of Nature ; and there is, secondly, the application of the knowledge so obtained to the practical uses of life. Regarding the actual origin and history of scientific discovery, it will appear that, as a matter of fact, the first part of science came into being for the sake of the second. The aim of the whole is, and always has been, definitely practical. But our minds have been so dazzled by the splendour of the achievements of theoretical science that we have come to regard it, from the point of view of thought, as if it were the whole. We have forgotten that the practical application is as well worth our consideration, as a revelation of truth, as pure theory itself. Our minds have been so obsessed with the idea of Nature as a great system of forces working according to invariable laws that we have gained the impression that Nature so regarded is an ultimate and self-sufficing reality. When we permit ourselves to reflect that all this discovery of forces and laws has been made in the pursuit of practical aims, with the view, that is, of using these forces and laws for our own human purposes, we discern that the lesson which science as a whole teaches about the constitution of Nature and its relation to ourselves is quite different. We discover that the more we know about natural laws, the greater is our power over natural forces. The conception of Nature which science has yielded is

indeed, when rightly regarded, a great proof of the victory of the spirit.

The main business of man's workaday life is his dealing with the forces of Nature. We live in a world containing an amazing multitude of things. By constant trying man has discovered that these things can be made use of in an infinite variety of ways so as to yield advantage or pleasure—to bring about, that is, desired results. In all this, man is subduing the world to his own will; he is mastering the forces of Nature and making them serve his purposes. When scientific methods are developed—that is, when laws of Nature are discovered and reduced to some system—this subjugation of Nature goes on with vastly increased rapidity. Look at the earth as it is to-day—almost completely transformed by human effort. Human hands have literally remade the world. Only in great mountain-ranges, or in some deserts and tropical forests, or near the poles, is it possible to find regions untouched by the hand of man. At the present moment methods of communication are being so perfected that the earth seems to be shrinking almost visibly, and is already too small for some imaginative minds.

What is the spiritual interpretation of all this? Surely it is the submissiveness of physical forces. Instead of living in a world in which the spirit is subdued to an iron necessity, we live in a world in which physical forces are everywhere doing homage to the lordship of the spirit. Man wills and Nature yields. Man issues his commands, and the world is at his feet.

Again, this subjugation of the physical world to the purposes of the spirit is carried on without any violation of the physical order. It is because physical forces act in accordance with unfailing laws that the

human will is able to employ them to effect its purposes. It is because of the uniformity of Nature that man can trust the forces of Nature to do his will. If Nature worked capriciously, no work could be done. Thus it appears that the iron necessity of Nature—that mysterious and formidable enemy, as it seems when regarded in the abstract—is really man's best friend. It is simply the trustworthiness of the system in which man finds himself. When man has discovered that certain natural causes always act in certain ways, he can then use those causes and trust them to produce the corresponding results, as occasion may require. Thus man's power is secured. He is free and mighty in the world because of this very necessity. It is the charter of his liberty and authority. Instead of being a cruel fate to bind him, it sets him free to accomplish his purposes.

Further, it is important to note that man escapes subjection to natural forces by making them modify one another. He can combine natural causes so as to produce effects which the unassisted course of Nature could never produce. He can use one force to counteract or divert another. So it is that he can defeat gravitation, make water run uphill, see through the solid flesh of his own body, send his messages round the world without any visible medium. Here again the forces and laws of the material world show themselves plastic to the will and in the hands of man. It would not be going too far to frame a definition of spirit, as it is known to us in our own mind and will, and say it is that which is able to control natural forces with a view to the accomplishment of preconceived ends.

How perfectly these considerations carry out the

distinction which we drew between spirit and the material world as that between a higher and lower reality! Though taken in the abstract the higher and lower seem to conflict, there is, in truth, a perfect harmony between them. Spirit is free; the world is subject to necessity. But all the laws of necessity find their perfect fulfilment within the freedom of the spirit. Nay, that freedom is the ultimate expression of their meaning. That is what Hegel meant when he said that freedom is the truth of necessity.

It is, however, clear that man's exercise of this freedom is very limited. Nature as a system of forces and laws far surpasses all human powers of subjugation. The limits which shut man in are, in part at all events, fairly obvious. Man's body, the instrument by which he operates in the natural world, is also the symbol of his limitation. It is small; slow in its movements when compared with the velocities of other physical things; limited in its means of approach. Recent investigation has shown that it is, in the main, an instrument of selection for practical uses, laying hold of such few elements out of the infinite wealth of Nature as serve the purposes of man's life.* The brain seems to be specially constructed for this process. It is an instrument of exchange, something like a telephone exchange, designed to allow an operator to respond to the messages received from without in the way which corresponds to his needs and designs.† It is not a storehouse of thought, and certainly not in itself possessed of the power of purposive selection.‡ It is, above all, a motor mechanism in the service of a conscious and willing operator.

* See Wildon Carr, *Philosophy of Change*, chap. v.

† Wildon Carr, *op. cit.*, chaps. iii and iv. ‡ *Ibid.*

While, therefore, the body, and especially the brain, serves man in his dealing with the world of spatial things, it is also an instrument which limits very strictly his dealing with these things.

What, then, are we to say of the great world of Nature as it exists apart from man's activity? Our experience makes us believe that the world of things in space standing in certain necessary relations to one another is infinitely vaster than those selected parts of it which enter into the experience of any man or of all men. If freedom be indeed the truth of necessity, there must be some all-embracing freedom which corresponds to the world-wide necessity.

We have here the exact counterpart of the argument which, when considering the philosophical implications of knowledge, enabled us to rise from Nature to God. On this occasion we are driven to the conclusion that the philosophical implications of the examination of will lead to a corresponding argument. The necessity of Nature implies the existence of a Universal Will. The stupendous mechanism of the heavens, the world-wide system of natural laws governing natural forces: all this can be nothing but the under side of a universal spiritual activity. As in relation to our human experience, the natural world, so far as it enters into our experience, is a reality of lower degree, access to which is obtained by abstracting from the movement of the full activity of our own life; so, in relation to universal experience, Nature is the corresponding reality of lower degree, an abstraction from the universal life. If Nature, apart from our dealing with it, is of the same quality and character as in our experience, no other conclusion is possible.

It is important in this connection to note that the

Universal Will is to be found, not in each particular manifestation of physical force as it operates in the world, but in the whole universe of physical necessity. There is a popular doctrine which identifies the will of God with every manifestation of physical energy. It is said that this energy or force which physics assumes, and the laws of which have been reduced to a high degree of exactness, is in every case the will of God working in the world, and appeal is made to our immediate knowledge of will as energy. It seems to me that, apart from the ambiguous use of the word *energy*, this conception fails, because it confuses the lower with the higher, the mechanical with the spiritual, the necessitated with the free. It reduces God to mechanism. The true view is surely that the Supreme Will posits, not each element separately, but the whole—the whole, within the sphere of which is contained the completely articulated system of the natural order. Freedom is the law of the determination of the whole, necessity the law of the determination of the parts.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

Closely connected with the consideration of human freedom in its relation to the natural and social environment of man's life stand two great problems which have in all ages forced themselves upon the attention of thinking minds, and which still remain amongst the most insistent and perplexing in the whole range of thought. These are the problems of pain and of evil. To the first of these we must now turn.

Evils have been by long custom divided into two classes—physical and moral, suffering and sin. The former we share with the animal creation, the latter we regard as peculiarly human. The former has to do very largely with our bodily organism and the material world to which it belongs, and to which it is so closely related; the latter is essentially concerned with our spiritual life as thinking, willing, and social beings.

Though pain is thus contrasted with sin as being very largely a matter of physical rather than of moral disorder, it is yet, as experienced by human beings, to a great extent involved in man's higher attainments. The range of pain is as wide as human life. From the vague uneasiness or acute suffering which assails us through our bodily organs to the agonies of disappointment, remorse, or hurt affection, which enter into our

higher activities, our experience is capable of an infinite variety of pain. It may be truly said that every faculty has its corresponding pain. Every member of the body, while it serves in its own way the purposes of enjoyment, is also the instrument of some related form of suffering. Our senses, which yield so much delight, are also means of sharp torment. Our intellectual powers, which in their healthy normal exercise give so much happiness, also present us with puzzles and problems which perplex and harass us—in some cases to such a degree as to overthrow the mental balance, and bring ruin to the whole organism. Our æsthetic faculties, which give us the enjoyment of beauty and harmony, bring also the apprehension of the hideous, the terrible, the discordant, the vile. Our affections, which afford the purest and sweetest joys we can know, too often become the means of the bitterest disappointments. Every power we possess—sense, reason, imagination, moral judgment, love—can become the minister of pain.

And it is not merely in human life that pain is found. It is seemingly a universal accompaniment of life, certainly of animal life. No sooner does a creature become capable of enjoyment than it also becomes capable of suffering.

Further, when we consider the whole economy of the natural world as it has been revealed by modern biology, we get the impression of a state of things in which all life and all progress involve pain. Life is sustained by life. Parents suffer for their offspring, multitudes die that one may live, whole generations are sacrificed that the race may benefit. Nature brings forth forms marked by the most perfect beauty, and then gives them over in countless myriads as food

for some hideous or monstrous breed. It is hard to say what degree of pain there may be in these countless sacrifices, but that there is some degree in most of them, and a high degree in many of them, seems to be obviously clear. The rending of flesh in quivering, sensitive things seems to our minds the very surest mark of pain.

It seems, then, that throughout the whole animate creation, as well as in human life, wherever there are faculties capable of enjoyment, there is suffering in some degree, and that in multitudes of cases that suffering becomes agony. The pain of the world, when we endeavour to form some imagination of it, impresses us as one of the most awful facts within our experience.

It is not surprising that in many minds there arises the suspicion that the ultimate nature of things, the final truth of the universe, must be altogether out of sympathy with the feelings of sensitive creatures. To some this great fact of pain seems to prove that the inner nature of reality is but a blind impulse, a force or tendency, without conscious thought or affection, that the sensitiveness of sensitive things is a mere incident, a mere accidental working out of necessary processes, and that therefore it is absurd to look up to any Supreme Spiritual Power as a possible helper, or as a wise Ruler whose great purpose will some day appear. Nature, seemingly, uses the sensitiveness of living things with perfect ruthlessness for her own ends. The cosmic process cares nothing for the pains of those that it crushes out of existence.

To others, the pain of the world is a proof that the problem of the universe is utterly insoluble. Here is a demonstration, such thinkers believe, that human

standards of thought and value have no near relation to the ultimate nature of things. We naturally regard the world from our own point of view, and to ourselves our sufferings are indeed important. Why should we think them to have a higher importance? They are but accidents of the universal process. Nature, after all, is kind, in that she blots them out in universal death. Their significance as elements in organic evolution is great, but why should we look for any higher meaning? Man's life is short, his faculties are limited. Let us improve the conditions of living as much as possible, and not trouble ourselves about ultimate problems.

We have already seen reason to reject the materialistic and agnostic interpretations of experience. We have seen that our conscious experience regarded as a whole leads us to believe that universal experience is very closely related to us, that spirit as we know it in ourselves is a safe guide to certain definite conclusions as to the character of that universal enfolding life which we discern to be implied in the mere fact that human experience is possible. We have seen reason to believe that Personality belongs to the Infinite Spirit which the constitution of the universe, known through our experience, involves. We have seen indeed that, in Him, Personality must reach a perfection far beyond any that we know; and that, though the Infinite must be of such a nature that Personality cannot be a final account of His being, yet we cannot regard his ultimate character as in any way inconsistent with Personal perfection.

If this be true, it is impossible to believe that the pain of the world is a mere by-product of the cosmic process, an incident in a great world-wide evolution,

which has no special significance outside the experience of those who suffer. Believing in God as One with whom we are akin, we must believe that, no matter what appearances may seem to prove, He is not regardless of the pain of creation, and that, in the end, this pain will be found to subserve some supremely great and good purpose. There must be some great meaning in it, and that meaning must be good.

At the same time, it is evident that reasoning of this kind cannot be finally satisfying. We must look into the problem itself, examine the facts, endeavour to realize the actual situation in the world and in human life, and determine whether we can discern any marks of beneficent purpose underlying the miseries to which sensitive creatures are subject.

The tremendous urgency of the problem appears at every stage of human thought. Asceticism seeks to overcome pain by the conquest of desire, using the evil thing itself as the means of destroying its power. Epicureanism snatches at whatever of pleasure and happiness life may yield, and hopes for enjoyment by means of a studied forgetfulness of the terror. Live for the moment, it teaches, and let hope and fear, past and future, be ignored. Drink of the wine of life to the best of your ability : it is all that you can be sure of : all besides is misery and oblivion.

> "Then to the lip of this poor earthen urn
> I lean'd, the secret of my life to learn :
> And lip to lip it murmur'd—'While you live,
> Drink !—for once dead, you never shall return.'"

In our own day, by a significant and very wonderful *tour de force*, Christian science escapes from the problem by simply denying its existence. Pain and struggle are unrealities, it teaches. They are illusions created

by "mortal mind." Our false views of life beget them. If we can but realize the truth that all is God and God is all, that God is good and good is God, we shall rise above the miseries of the world, pain will vanish, disease will disappear, finally even death itself will be overcome. The sudden advent of this marvellous creed and its wide acceptance are very astonishing facts. They show the vigour with which an optimistic race rebels against the prevalence of pain. If the facts cannot be disproved, they must be denied.

In theological thought this problem has always occupied a large space. In the main, the question is concerned with conceptions of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God. If He be perfectly wise and good, and at the same time omnipotent, how can He have created a world so full of suffering as this in which we live? The first reply which the human mind gave to this question was that God is a just Ruler and Judge, and therefore the evil man must suffer. Pain is a punishment for sin. But this answer failed to satisfy, because the good suffer as well as the evil. In ancient Hebrew literature this was the side of the problem which attracted most attention. It is the theme of the Book of Job and of many of the Psalms. The answer which is given is not philosophical, nor even theological: it is essentially a religious answer. It is just this: Trust in God; He knows all things; we are incapable of understanding His ways; but of this we may be sure—He will bring everything right in the end, and we shall find that, with perfect righteousness, evil has been punished and goodness rewarded. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall make thy righteousness to go forth as the

light, and thy judgment as the noonday."* It is not clear that thought has made much advance on that, in the religious solution of this particular problem. But the general problem remains. The pain of the world as a whole has to be considered. And here we can gain much help from modern psychology and biology.

We can nowadays understand the uses of pain much better than formerly. Pleasure and pain have certainly a close relation to life and development. They have important functions to perform. In general it may be said that pleasure is a quality of the feeling which accompanies the normal and perfect exercise of any living function, whether it be organic, mental, moral, or social. Pleasure is the enjoyment of perfect life in any of its many forms. Pain is the feeling of disorganized, perverted, imperfect, or overstrained life.

Perhaps the most complete illustration of the nature of pleasure is the feeling we experience in the semi-consciousness of awakening from a perfectly healthy, dreamless sleep. We have the sensation of leaving behind a state of being characterized by pure enjoyment. When it dawns upon the mind that this state must be left behind, there is a recognition of extraordinary regret. That dreamless state is not a blank; it is, in its own primitive way, perfect bliss. And perhaps there is, in the smaller experiences of life, no finer proof of the moral force that belongs to man than the fact that he tears himself out of that bliss in obedience to the call of simple everyday duty. Though the dreamless sleep is not a blank, it is nevertheless the nearest approach we can get in our experience to a condition in which our life consists in the mere performance of healthy natural functions altogether un-

* Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.

complicated by the intellectual and moral complexities of our waking existence. Here is an experiment which will reveal to the mind unskilled in psychological analysis the essential nature of pleasure.

Its crucial character is shown by the fact that any disorganization or overstraining of function will injure or destroy the pleasure. If brain, heart, or digestive organs, be working amiss, the pleasure vanishes or is merged in pain, no matter how deep and dreamless the sleep may be. It is the perfect function which yields pleasure.

And what is true of the lower functions is also true of the higher activities, though we do not discern it so clearly on account of the complication of the facts. The enjoyment we have in a glorious landscape, or a great picture, or in noble music, or in a fine display of character, or in the doing of our work with success, is due to the correspondence between our faculties of appreciation, or our active powers, and the object with which they are engaged. A good musical ear gets pleasure from harmony and pain from discord because of the perfect correspondence between its fine faculty of appreciation and the order and relation of the sounds which it apprehends in the one case and of the want of correspondence in the other. In this correspondence one of the higher functions is finding its proper exercise.

Certain important and highly interesting conclusions follow from this account of the nature of pleasure. We learn that pleasure is essentially positive. It is not, as Schopenhauer and other pessimists have taught, a mere relief from pain. Philosophers of this school hold that pleasure is essentially the feeling of satisfied desire, and that, as desire is a continual striving for

the unattained, enjoyment is essentially fugitive. Relief and pleasure come when the desire is satisfied; but this satisfaction vanishes in the moment of attainment, and with it goes the pleasure. This doctrine has found its most perfect expression in the old saying current in the East:

> "Life is pleasure and pain,
> And, for it passes, all pleasure is pain in the making."

There are two elements in life, say the Eastern sages—pleasure and pain, but pleasure is only a passing satisfaction; we must lose it and lose it quickly: therefore it is itself but another form of pain. Hence it follows that life is painful through and through.

Based on this reasoning is the doctrine that the negation of the will to live is the one way of happiness. Will, conation, the striving towards some end, is the true reality, it is said, of all that we call life. It is by its nature essentially unhappy. In peace, cessation, the annihilation of will, is to be found man's highest good. From this arises the conception of Nirvana—bliss attained through the loss of personal existence, absorption in the Infinite.

We have here the foundation of all pessimisms. It is a mode of thought which is not only the doctrine of certain philosophers, but is, in various forms, held by millions. It is therefore eminently worthy of consideration.

The essence of the doctrine is that pleasure is a negation, mere relief from the strain of desire. In contrast with this view we hold that pleasure is positive, and that it is the constant accompaniment of all healthy normal living activities. This view is borne out by the following considerations:

First, any simple particular instance of pleasure

proves its positive character. The enjoyment we have in the perfume of a rose is surely a very definite and positive thing. In the enjoyment of such a pleasure as this there need be no element of relief from the strain of desire. Walking through a garden, every sense satisfied, we draw near without knowing it to a blooming rose-tree. Suddenly, as an addition to the perfume already delighting us, there comes a new and keener pleasure. Nothing more definitely positive can be imagined.

Secondly, conation, the effort of will straining towards some end, is not necessarily painful. A healthy child, or a man or woman in the fulness of youth and strength, finds delight in mere effort. It is not only the end gained which delights, but the putting forth of the power in order to gain it. There is, as a matter of experience, a keen joy in the perfect exercise of any faculty.

Thirdly, it is possible to detect very clearly the source of the false doctrine of the nature of pleasure. Its origin is to be found in certain special conditions which belong to human conscious experience. The physiology of the brain shows that, in the succession of the various elements which form the mechanism (if the word be permitted) of any action, consciousness arises when a new adjustment has to be made. All our activities seem to be connected with stimuli which come to us from without. The stimulus is transmitted by the afferent nerves to the brain. There a reaction takes place, the efferent nerves carry the response to the corresponding organ, and the circle is completed by an action. Thus we react upon our environment. In many cases the whole series works automatically. There is no consciousness at all so far as we are aware;

there is certainly no conscious intelligence. It appears to be a purely mechanical process from beginning to end, though probably not so in its inner nature. In other cases, when the stimulus reaches the cortex of the brain, an active consciousness springs into being. There is a break in the mechanical series. With consciousness comes the power to inhibit the response. The message back along the efferent nerves is delayed until conscious intelligence has decided on the form which the response is to take.

It is clear, therefore, that functions which operate with perfect order and precision, carrying out necessary duties in the economy of the organism, make no demand upon our powers of conscious choice. The use of conscious intelligence is to deal with difficult cases, to guard against surprise, to seek for the better and reject the worse. Consciousness, in fact, is clearest at the points of highest strain in all the activities in which it is involved. This is the bright focus of attention; and the greater the difficulty, the more fully is consciousness involved.

The effect is that, conscious activity being especially concerned with the point of highest strain in our active life, we are inclined, in our reflections upon our experience, to pass over mere enjoyments, and fasten our attention upon the moments of strain. We think of these moments as revealing the essential reality of our being, not discerning that they are but elements in an experience which is infinitely greater than they. And so man's life seems to be a continual strife and a pursuing, with no real attainment—

> "The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the eve for the morrow;
> The longing for something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow."

The situation which thus comes to light is of supreme importance for the due consideration of the problem before us. We are now able to understand something of the place and function of pain in human experience.

First, physical pain is a danger-signal. It awakens attention to some peril threatening the bodily organism. Its function here is of great value. It startles the mind into an attitude of strained attention, so that the danger may be avoided. So far as it serves this purpose pain is not an evil.

Again, pain is often, though surely not always, attached to the strain of attention which marks the decisions of the will. We have seen how clearly this fact has been brought out by recent investigations. The moral significance of it is very great. Effort, often painful effort, is the condition of moral progress. We learn from this that, in the development of living forms, when consciousness in the full sense of the term appears, further advance must be won through a choosing which must, in many instances, be painful. Thus, conscious desire, dissatisfaction with present attainment, renunciation of a lower life, sacrifice, struggle with self, enter into conscious experience. From that moment pain becomes a condition of a victorious moral existence.

In general, it may be said that pain is connected with disordered or unsettled function. It is a warning, a sign of disease or disorder. It is also a sign of that condition of unsettlement which affords opportunity for advance and of the effort by which advance is achieved in a conscious volitional being. When a settled functional order is broken in upon in any way, pain is likely to make its appearance. As pleasure

is the concomitant of perfect organic functioning, so is pain the concomitant of imperfect functioning. And thus may be due either to a breaking down of organic harmony, as in disease or in case of organic injury, or to the effort towards higher and better things.

The value and importance of pain are therefore immeasurably great. We cannot speak of it as in its nature evil. Its influence is, on the whole, beneficent.

It is necessary to be quite clear, in our consideration of this subject, as to what constitutes value for the will. Hedonism in all its forms regards pleasure as the good, and therefore regards pain as essentially evil. But this doctrine is radically unsound. The object of the will is not the pleasure which is gained by each particular action. Desire, which is the raw material of volition, is always directed towards some object which is in correspondence with its own particular nature. This object is presented as in itself desirable, and so acts as a stimulus which awakens the will to action. I mention this familiar refutation of hedonism in order to guard against a misapprehension which is likely to arise here.

We are now in a position to obtain a clearer view of the problem of pain in relation to our belief in a Universal Divine Life enfolding all finite life and giving reality and consistency to all experience.

Ever since the Darwinian doctrine of the struggle for existence, as the main method of evolution in organic life, found wide acceptance, the minds of thoughtful men have been oppressed with the sense of the pain of the world. Every beautiful form of life seemed to be the outcome of aeons of agony. Behind every marvellous adaptation of organism to environment seemed to stretch an infinite history of torture, pursuer and

pursued, torn flesh and quivering nerves, countless millions of lovely forms and sensitive living things sacrificed, brief snatches of enjoyment engulfed in abysses of pain.

We can now see, I think, that, even if natural selection has done all that has been supposed by its most thoroughgoing supporters, we have been misled by the simple process of attributing to the animal creation all the pain that our human imagination, drawing from our own experience, connects with a state of existence such as has been described. We have suffered from the effects of a great illusion.

Pleasure belongs to all perfect organic functions. The existence of the healthy normal animal is pleasurable through and through. Throughout the lower creation as a whole, stimulus is followed by reaction in a perfectly inevitable succession, in the vast majority of actions. Among the higher animals there may be, in certain instances, cases in which consciousness intervenes, as with man, in order to break the circuit and give time for choice and painful effort. But, even if this be true, we are probably inclined to exaggerate its importance from the fact that we judge of animals mainly from the highly developed domesticated groups which have been associated with man and have shared his life.

Bergson in his examination of instinct as contrasted with intelligence shows that, in the former, conscious effort acts directly, attaining its end without the intervention of the intellectual process and the deliberation which mark human choice. Instinct is clearly a function which operates immediately. The deep pleasure which belongs to a dreamless sleep, as we know it in our own experience, affords an analogy which will help us greatly here. It is not to be supposed, of

course, that the animal consciousness is no more developed than our own sleeping consciousness. The point is that in perfect sleep we have an instance in our own experience of the pure pleasure which belongs to natural functions which operate immediately. When we have got rid of the break which the use of the intelligence and human choice involve, we find ourselves in a life which is filled with pure unbroken enjoyment. And so we may reasonably conclude that if the animal consciousness attains its ends without that break, it also owns a life which is purely happy while it is functioning in a healthy normal manner. For the animal, pain is simply a sign of disordered function and a danger-signal.

The animal world, in spite of all the hunting and slaying which it involves, is therefore, on the whole, a very happy world.

It seems clear that the principle which has come to light in this way is one which probably goes much further back into the earlier or remoter stages of life than we are at first inclined to suspect. It has been said that consciousness sleeps in the vegetable world, dreams in the animal world, and awakens in man. The saying probably expresses a truth, though its classification of the various stages is no doubt more poetic than scientific. If it be correct that pleasure is the concomitant of perfect functioning, there is good reason to think that even the vegetable world is pervaded by an inner happiness of its own. Certainly the splendid vigour of its life and its astonishing beauty bear out such a belief.

Much more could be said on this great subject. It has often been pointed out that even the sudden deaths which are characteristic of the wild animal's way of

living are often painless, and that the victim of a tiger or lion is benumbed by a torpor which is more pleasureable than painful. But it is still more to the point to consider that if it belong to the nature of a creature to be hunted by its natural enemies, the fulfilling of that nature probably involves more pleasure than pain. The flight and escape of a deer is probably a delightful sensation. A flight ending in death has probably but little that is painful in it. In these instances the creature is performing natural functions and performing them well.

It is when we come to man that we find pain filling a great space and becoming a terrible element in existence. Yet here it is clear, from what has been said above, that this very fact is a signal proof of man's greatness and high destiny. It is through pain that man must win his way to the full realization of his capacities. His gift of deliberate choice makes him capable of lofty attainments, and the price he pays for his greatness is the endurance of suffering in a special and higher sense. We have seen that his value cannot be estimated in terms of pleasure and pain; he is framed for things of another sort, things essentially nobler. All great literature recognizes this truth.

"Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe;

"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!"*

* Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

The good which corresponds to our nature, and in which we are to find our realization, is not pleasure, but something truly objective and permanent—a perfection which is beyond us, and to which all true human living is in some sort or degree an approximation. But it is through the pain of desire and of effort, the pain of self-denying choice, the pain of struggle against difficult and adverse circumstances, that all true advance towards this end is to be won. In this fact lies the greatness of human life.

And what is true of the individual is true also of the human race. Man must win his way to the goal by sacrifice and suffering.

A true optimism will not then lose itself in vain calculations as to whether there is more of pain or of pleasure in human experience. Estimation is here impossible, for the simple reason that we are dealing with realities which are not capable of quantitative measurement. We are dealing with values, realities which are essentially qualitative. And the witness of history and of experience is that the value of mere sensational pleasure and pain bears no comparison with the value of true and worthy living—living, that is, which is directed to an end which is esteemed as in itself possessing intrinsic and absolute worth.

A very impressive illustration of this truth is given in the facts of the present time. Upon a pleasure-seeking world there burst, a few months ago, the awful tempest of the great war. The opinion had been widely expressed that the men and women of our time, enervated by wealth and pursuing sensational enjoyments, had rendered themselves incapable of heroic sacrifice and effort. Events speedily proved the complete falsehood of this estimate. The appeal

for personal sacrifice met with an immediate and splendid response; and, more remarkable still, the revelation which so soon took place of the terrible destructiveness of modern scientific weapons, and of the novel risks of modern warfare, instead of damping the ardour of our volunteers, but increased their eagerness. No possibility of suffering, no probability of horrible surprise involving torture and death, served to abate their zeal. The men and women of our nation realized with swift comprehension that the end for which they were called to give themselves was one worthy in itself—so worthy that to hold back would be to stand self-condemned—and at once every consideration of pain and sacrifice became a matter of no account.

Yet the pain involved in such sacrifice has a very important function. It increases immeasurably the moral value. A sacrifice which involved no pain would be no sacrifice at all. It is not going too far to say that the painful element in life has the special function of intensifying all moral values. It makes them costly, and therefore precious. It gives weight, seriousness, dignity to much that would be otherwise trifling. It may be taken, indeed, as the element whose special function it is to make us realize the nobility of all noble things.

We are now in a position to discern something of the relation of pain to our belief in a Divine Life enfolding all human experiences. It is clear, surely, that when we make an effort to understand the true function and value of pain, we find it to be, on the whole, not a difficulty in the way of belief, but exactly the opposite. First, we realize that the world as a whole is not a vast torture-chamber. It is of the

essence of normal healthy life to have an inner joyousness which is the concomitant of all perfect vital processes. Life and happiness are closely related. Life is made for gladness. In the animal world this happiness is broken in upon from time to time by pain, in order that warning of danger from outward attack or inner disease may be given. In addition, we find that pain in the animal world accompanies the process of the struggle for existence. It is the mark of the movement from lower forms of life to higher. As compared with human experience, this intervention of pain is very external and accidental. It does not touch very nearly the inner life, because the quality of that inner life is characteristically instinctive. Deliberation, choice, consideration of possibilities, the looking before and after, have very little share in the conscious life of animals. These things which form the proper realm of pain belong especially to man.

An illustration of some importance is supplied by the consideration of pain as a danger-signal. In the case of the animal, pain awakens to a danger which is, as a rule, to be avoided by some instinctive movement. In the case of man, it awakens to intellectual consideration and conscious choice of means to escape. Hence, with man, pain awakens pain : the physical pain calls up anxious thought and impels to an effort which is often in itself painful. There is a cumulative effect of pain. If the effort to escape the physical pain is not successful, there is added to that lower form of suffering the agony of vain striving and disappointment ; and the acute consciousness which accompanies this, the looking before and after, the thought of what might have been, increase the pain and give it inevitably a quality which is essentially human, and far

removed from anything involved in sufferings amongst creatures less highly endowed. It is the addition of this spiritual element which makes human suffering the terrible thing that it is.

Yet from this very fact there comes a complete transvaluation. It is for this reason that in human life the element of pain, which here assumes such immense proportions and fills such vast spaces, undergoes a sudden transformation. It becomes the mark of man's nobility and the very means of his exaltation. No longer externally attached to the upward movement, as with animals, it enters into his very life, so deeply that the voluntary acceptance of it becomes the essential condition of all lofty achievements, and the recognition of it an important means of the discernment of spiritual values.

It is quite clear that, the conditions of human life being what they are, humanity would have been a far poorer thing, and the value of life far meaner, if pain had been omitted.

There is a great saying of Bacon's that "the blessing of the Old Testament is prosperity, the blessing of the New Testament is adversity." Certainly Christianity has ennobled our view of suffering. It has taught us to discern in it the way to attainment and victory. The message of the suffering Christ to the world in all ages since the first proclamation of His Gospel has been "Die to live." Christianity brought about a new relation of suffering to human experience as a whole. Pain was found to have a deep meaning and an inestimable value for God and man; and this teaching was presented at the first in the concrete facts of a great life, and all through later ages in a continuous experience. "The fellowship of Christ's sufferings" became an

essential part of the Christian life. And, strange to say, this high estimation of the value of pain did not involve any hardening of the heart towards the sufferings of the world. On the contrary, side by side with it there grew up a new tenderness towards the afflicted, a new realization of duty towards suffering humanity, and, in due time, a new sympathy with all sensitive suffering creatures. The adding of a new value to pain did not result in any willingness to inflict it, but rather a strenuous endeavour to relieve all who are oppressed by it. It is interesting also to note that the anti-Christian movement of thought in recent times, which finds its extreme expression in the teaching of Nietzsche, has been accompanied by a new and amazing reaction towards pagan callousness.

It is important to realize that while great value is thus attached to pain as an influence making for moral progress, it would be quite wrong to suppose that pain in itself could form any part of the ultimate goal towards which human life is directed. It is clearly and definitely a means, not an end.

What we must believe is that through the discipline of pain humanity is working upwards to a new and higher adjustment, a new and higher harmony of function and life. The analogy of instinct will help us here. From Bergson's admirable analysis we gather that instinct marks the summit of the development of conscious activity along certain limited lines. Instinct seems to have attained its perfection. The human conscious activity, marked as it is by deliberative choice, is still in the making. Pain is the sign of its incompleteness. But it too will, at some future epoch, attain its perfection, and, in that great consummation, pain will vanish. Suffering, the means by which the great

goal is to be reached, will inevitably disappear in the attainment of its purpose.

Regarding conscious life as a whole, then, we find excellent reason to hold that in the fact of pain there is nothing to shake our belief in an all-embracing Divine Life, whose character is essentially good and whose providence designs for the universe of living beings a final and supreme blessedness.

What, then, are we to say of the way in which the fact of pain presses upon the individual? Even if it be true that, taking organic and human life as a whole, the net effect of our investigation is to show that pain is a subordinate, not a dominating, element, what about the terrible misfortunes that so often befall the innocent? And what about the sufferings of the good? These things seem to prove a want of completeness in the system of the universe, an irrational element which is hard to reconcile with belief in the supreme wisdom, power, and goodness of God. We have seen that the ancient solution of this problem was simply a resort to a religious attitude of humility and dependence, a recognition of God's greatness and our ignorance, and an exhortation to trust in His goodness, with the conviction that He will surely make everything come right in the end. The justification of this attitude is to be found in Bishop Butler's doctrine of "our ignorance." We have no faculties by which to decide what the scheme of God's providence ought to be. It must, from the very nature of things, be so far beyond our comprehension as to make it impossible for us to judge of the rightness of any particular instance of the Divine administration.

This attitude of mind may be regarded as a devout Agnosticism in relation to the ultimate problems, an

eminently reasonable attitude towards mysteries which have baffled all generations of thinking men. But there is no reason why we should not endeavour to get a little further, and there is also no reason to suppose that the progress of thought and discovery may not supply us with the means of making some further advance. It seems to me that it does The principles which came to light in the earlier part of our investigations should make it clear that, though we cannot solve the ultimate question as to the distribution of suffering in human life, we can grasp the reason why we cannot solve it. What is unsatisfactory about the argument of Bishop Butler is that it depends upon a vague and general statement that certain problems are beyond our comprehension. It is unable to draw a line and say, Here are problems we can deal with, and here are problems which are essentially insoluble by us; or, if it does attempt to draw such a line, it gives no clear principle according to which it is drawn.

A principle of this kind is what we require, and it has, I think, come to light. We have seen that there are degrees of reality, that, so far as our experience goes, the sphere of intellect is to be found in those degrees which are below that occupied by us in the full concreteness of our living. Even the fulness of our own conscious experience is not such that it can be perfectly grasped by the concepts and logic of the intellect. When we pass upwards, however, and consider God, we find ourselves in the presence of a degree of reality not below, but above, our own. We may rightly apply to Him the term Personality, because He must possess Personality in even greater perfection than we do. But we cannot regard Personality as the

final description of His nature. As His unity includes all finite persons within the sphere of His being, as His life embolds all other lives, so must the ultimate nature of that unity be something supra-personal. It must have a degree of reality higher than that in which we live. It appears, then, that we can think out with perfect clearness the relation between that highest reality and each human personal life as absurd. We cannot do it. It is useless for us to apprehend the fulness of such human consciousness as we can grasp the relation of that experience to a degree of reality higher than it?

All that we can therefore hope to do is to show, by an examination of the facts within our experience and the observation of life as a whole, what is the actual state of the case when it is considered in a large way: whether suffering is a subordinate element or not; whether, if it be subordinate, the tendency is upwards towards a higher life or downwards towards more suffering. When we have done actual examination, that pain is subordinate that it serves on the whole a beneficent purpose, that life is immensely a joyous thing, we can face the ultimate mystery with reasonable confidence and believe that the Supreme Spirit in whom every soul lives and moves and has its being will not be less kind to the individual than He is to the race.

CHAPTER VIII

EVIL

The problem of evil is usually considered the greatest of all. It is the final difficulty, the mystery which lies in wait for every philosopher when he endeavours to make his thoughts about the universe consistent. A thinker who aims at satisfying the demands of the critical intelligence must always take account of it. Even if he fails in solving it, he should be able to show that he can safely leave it unsolved.

The materialist, or agnostic, has apparently an easy way out of the difficulty. Regarding the spiritual side of man's nature as an epiphenomenal concomitant of material changes, or as an insoluble problem, he concerns himself only with certain well-defined elements and with human life as part of the universal evolutionary process. The question of evil as generally presented seems to him to be only a derivative of certain theological or metaphysical presuppositions which do not enter at all into the system of his thought. For him evil is simply a name for certain classes of facts which arise inevitably in the course of development. Pain and sin are marks of the struggle, disease, and waste which are involved in the evolutionary process. The former is useful to the organism as a signal of danger, the latter indicates actions

which have been condemned as injurious to organized human life or mischievous in relation to human happiness. Apart from this, there is no absolute standard in these things, and therefore no ultimate question. Moral values are subject to continual readjustment in accordance with the stage of development to which they belong. The virtue of one age may be a vice in the next. As the conditions of human life vary, the accepted moral values shift and change. A good man is a man whose ideas and conduct correspond with his social environment. A bad man is a man whose ideas and conduct do not so correspond. The more brutal crimes are due to a reappearance of primitive instincts, savage ferocity, and lack of self-control. Others are marks of degeneracy. Sometimes a man is condemned because he is in advance of his generation. Society is bound to punish crime in order to protect itself against elements which tend to break it up or to destroy the general happiness. Thus there comes into being a recognized code of conduct. Here is the moral standard. When such a standard has been formed, it exerts a very powerful influence by means of public opinion. Few individuals are strong enough to set themselves in opposition to the voice of the community. Hence the whole range of moral ideas: moral law, responsibility, conscience, sin, remorse, retribution.

There can be no doubt that this is, in many respects, a true account of much that happens in the history of moral progress. But the root questions remain unanswered. Whence comes the sense of absolute value which belongs to moral judgments? Whence the recognition of absolute authority in the moral command? Why should a man give himself and all that he has in a moral cause, if the moral distinction

be a mere question of more or less perfect adjustment to the passing conditions of his age? Why should certain extreme forms of baseness raise a passionate indignation unparalleled in other cases, and why should it be universally held that this is not merely justifiable, but righteous and necessary?

It is quite clear that if the materialist and agnostic account of the nature of evil were widely accepted and popularized, the sense of absolute value in moral distinctions, and the sense of rightness and necessity in moral indignation, would vanish—that is, the essentially moral element would disappear. If the materialist is right, the more a man knows about the nature of morality the less moral he is likely to be. The keenness of our moral instincts, and the sense of value we attach to our moral decisions, are, in fact, based on illusion.

The sense of an absolute value in the moral judgment is really the greatest thing in human life. It is the soul of all heroisms, all noble sacrifices, all great endeavours. It is the inspiration of all patient doing of common duties, and of every sincere service rendered to mankind.

A system of thought which passes by this tremendous fact stands condemned. The impotence of Materialism and Agnosticism are here most clearly revealed. Face to face with the supreme problem, they have nothing to say. It is a demonstration of futility.

Idealism has been able to deal much more effectively with the ultimate moral problem. It has been able to show that the principle of an absolute good is involved in the existence of the self-conscious subject. The relation of subject to object as the fundamental fact in experience yields, in the practical sphere, the con-

ception of the good as the end in which the self finds its true realization. There is therefore set before man as the true goal of all his efforts the attainment of a perfection which is absolute because it arises out of the very nature of his spiritual being. It is the end for which he exists. So far as he fails in attaining it, he loses the true purpose of his existence. Here is full justification for all the duties, sacrifices, and heroisms of human life. It is a doctrine which makes life worth living, duty worth doing, and sin worth hating. So far as it goes, this teaching is surely true.

But it cannot be said that Idealism in its more complete form, as derived from Hegel and taught in the schools, is able to deal with the other side of the question. It can give us a sound doctrine of the good, but it cannot solve the problem of evil. Here it is helpless. For Hegelian Idealism, the universe is throughout a rational whole. Thought is the final principle of things. A perfect evolution, proceeding in accordance with a logical development of all categories, and finding its consummation in the Absolute Idea, is the true description of the universe. The whole system is perfectly articulated. Every apparent contradiction finds its resolution in the next higher stage, as thought ascends. There can be no place for an unresolved element. The Absolute Idea is the final and absolute good. Everything that happens must take its place in the production of the final result. There can therefore be no place for an element which is out of harmony with the universal order.

The theological interpretation of this doctrine makes it clearer. According to this, the whole course of the universe from beginning to end is the working out of the Divine purpose. Every element must subserve

the one supreme end. God's will is good, and determines, or overrules, each event. There can be nothing which hangs loose or disconnected—no ragged ends. No break, no interruption, no useless element, can find a place in the whole. The will of man works out the Divine Will. To be consistent, such a doctrine must deny human freedom in any real sense, or escape from this conclusion by making each human will a manifestation of the Divine. In systems of this nature, freedom can properly be attributed to God only; human actions are strictly determined. Determinism of the most rigid sort comes back under the name of freedom.

It is for this reason that Idealism of this kind has been rightly described as only an "inverted Naturalism." Human initiative in any real sense is as much denied as in the most perfect Materialism.

These considerations show that the problem of evil is to-day in much the same position as that which it occupied many centuries ago. The difficulty is simply the problem of free-will in its most acute form. How is the independence of human will consistent with a supreme purpose, a final goal, a settled order, in the world? If man's will is really free, it seems to produce chaos in the universe; it seems to take away the very possibility of order. Philosophically, it seems to introduce a disorganizing irrational element. Theologically, it seems to set man's will against God's will in hopeless antagonism.

This is the shape in which the problem of evil has haunted thought from the beginning. It is well worth while to regard the question from the religious and theological point of view. Thus, its essential nature becomes apparent. Evil is a violation of the rational

integrity of the universe. It is will going astray, aiming at ends which are inconsistent with the supreme controlling purpose of the whole. It is spiritual disorder, the assertion of the self-seeking will against the universal good. As, in a community, crime is the wilful act of an individual in violation of the general welfare; so, in the whole moral order, sin is the antagonism of the single or partial will to the universal will. Its essence is the conflict of wills.

In the effort to solve this problem in a manner consistent with the theological conception of the sovereign omnipotence of God, theology has found itself involved in hopeless difficulty. By general consent in recent years the struggle has been abandoned. On the one hand, the supremacy of the Divine Will has been affirmed as a fundamental dogma, and, on the other, the reality of human freedom as the essential condition of moral life has been assumed; and no real endeavour to combine the two in a single consistent system has been made. The antinomy has been accepted as a fundamental difficulty in the nature of things of which it is no longer worth while attempting the solution. It is pointed out, however, that we must regard the existence of free human wills as due to an act of self-limitation on the part of the Almighty for a definite purpose. Goodness is possible only in a being whose will is free. To be genuine, goodness must be freely willed, it cannot be the result of compulsion. God as a Supreme Moral Ruler desires a service freely rendered, the willing obedience of moral creatures, not the soulless service of machines. In order to make moral living possible in finite spirits, He, of His own free will, limited Himself and endowed humanity with something of His own freedom. Thus it is that we

become worthy to be called the children of God. But if this endowment is necessary for the possibility of true goodness in finite creatures, it follows inevitably that, through it, evil also becomes possible. Moral good demands free choice, and free choice implies the possibility of moral evil. In creating moral beings capable of yielding to Him a free and loving service, God opened the way for the exact opposite, a free choice which rejects the good.

It is hardly possible for any devout Christian thinker of the present time to avoid this position. It results necessarily from the belief in God and the acceptance of the doctrine of free-will as the essential foundation of morality. It is also in close correspondence with the facts of religious and moral experience. Yet it provides no escape from the fundamental difficulty. It introduces a seemingly irrational element into the very constitution of things. It even appears to open up the possibility of an ultimate defeat of the Divine purpose. If the power of God be limited either in its own essential nature, or by an act of self-limitation, what guarantee is there that the good will finally prevail? Why may not the forces of evil grow stronger than the forces of good and at last overcome them?

It seems to be clear that while we think of God as Personal Will on the same level of reality as the multitude of human personal wills, there is no answer to this question. All we can do is to accept the puzzle as insoluble and trust that there is in God a supreme power which will somehow bring everything right in the end. Once again we find religion coming to the help of theology.

Confronted with the difficulty which has just been set

forth, theologians and philosophers often attempt to escape by maintaining that evil is, in its nature, an unreality. Among ancient thinkers who adopted this view, St. Augustine is the most famous. "Let no one," he writes, "seek for the efficient cause of the evil will. The cause is not efficient, but deficient." Evil, according to him, is not an effect, but a defect. It is not positive, but negative. As well might one ask "to see darkness or to hear silence" as to inquire for the efficient cause of evil.*

There are insuperable objections to this doctrine. First, evil cannot be a mere privation like darkness or silence, because goodness and evil are not opposites of the same sort as light and darkness, sound and silence. In these cases the one correlative is unmeaning without the other. Where there is no light there must, for those who have eyes, be darkness; where there is no sound there must, for those who have ears, be silence. Light and darkness, sound and silence, necessarily imply one another. But good does not involve evil in this way. Goodness, in a moral being, involves the possibility of evil, but not its actuality. A world in which every moral being always chose the good and rejected the evil is perfectly conceivable. A perfectly good life implies the absence of sin, but not the absence of temptation. The existence of the good does not involve the existence of its opposite.

Secondly, actual experience shows that evil is not a mere privation. As the essence of goodness is the good will, or good character, so the essence of evil is the evil will or evil character. In each case the moral quality implies a definite set or disposition of the personality. The wickedness of a wicked man consists

* *De Civitate*, xii. 7.

in the fact that, by his acts of choice, he has given himself a certain definite character; and that character is, in its own way, a positive reality of the moral world. If evil were merely the privation of good it would be impossible to distinguish it from innocence. Go back to the beginning of a moral life. A being possessed of moral capacity, assumed to be without any definite character, faces its first moral decision. Before the choice is made such a being would be neither good nor evil. In the choice of the good it becomes good. But surely the absence of that goodness before the choice was made did not make it evil. Apart from inherited dispositions, something like this must happen at the beginning of every moral life. That primitive innocence is privative in relation to goodness, but it is certainly not evil.

When we consider the evil character as we know it in hardened criminals, or in the refined selfishness to be found in highly civilized societies, its positive quality becomes extremely evident.

Thirdly, a sufficient proof that St. Augustine's account of evil is not satisfactory is supplied by the consideration that immoral conduct is essentially the work of the will. It comes into being in the form of definite voluntary decisions, which are as positive as anything in our experience. How little the conception of defect, in contrast to effect, helps us is evident when we consider that wilful defection from the good is as positive a thing as the wilful effecting of any result could be. The act of a will is always positive no matter what the quality of the result may be. It is, indeed, the most positive thing we know.

We cannot, then, escape the great problem by a device of this nature. The evil will is a positive

fact. We must accept it as such. We cannot solve our problem by the simple process of denying its reality.

At the same time there is a great truth behind St. Augustine's distinction. While good can exist without evil, evil could not exist apart from good. Good implies the possibility of evil, not its actuality; but evil implies the actuality of good. For evil is possible only in a world in which various wills are at work, and in such a world evil is essentially a discordant element. It is the setting up of the individual will against the universal welfare; it is the conflict of wills; and a world in which all wills were at all times and in every respect in conflict would be an impossibility. For a social world to exist at all there must be in it some kind or degree of harmony. As Plato points out, a band of robbers, in so far as it holds together, must observe justice. For a community to exist at all there must be some social cement, some degree of mutual confidence and good will. Universal evil would involve the annihilation of all social life. When therefore we speak of evil as being in its nature subordinate to good, or, as it is sometimes put, subcontrary to good, we mean that if human or spiritual beings are to exist in relation to one another there must be a moral basis for their union, and that were evil to become absolutely dominant social life would be impossible. Moral relationship is the necessary presupposition of all social existence. This seems to be perfectly clear. But this does not mean that evil is an unreality. Its meaning is that if evil were to overcome good completely there would follow an end of all moral life. If such an event took place in human society, it would involve the degradation of man below

the moral level; for man as a moral being must live in some degree of social relationship.

The view of evil which we have been examining is sometimes put in another way. Instead of declaring evil an unreality, it is said that it is a lower good. It is good in the making. The virtues of one age, it is said, are the vices of another. Murder and lying were at one time legitimate institutions. Gradually, as man advanced in his upward development, these practices became limited more and more. It is by means of what we now call evil that man rose to a higher good. We have to thank the faults of the past for the virtues of the present. They were simply the low er experiences through which man won his way to a better life. Where the tendency to these old practices appears in a man of the present day we call it criminal, but in truth it is merely primitive. The man of the Stone Age lives again in the habitual criminal whom we condemn to our prisons. We punish the virtues of our forefathers in the persons of those of their children who walk in the old paths. These ways of life are simply out of date.

Thinkers who adopt this line of explanation have already been referred to. Their point of view is that of the evolutionist whose whole attention is given to the process by which changes have come about without sufficient regard to the special character of the facts. It is perfectly true that things which our forefathers permitted or approved would be condemned to-day. But surely we owe our better knowledge, not to the practices which they allowed and we have abandoned, but to that in them which enabled them to rise above those practices. Conscience gains enlightenment by experience, but it must be an experience in which the man recognizes a true good and seeks to attain it.

Ever striving upward, man's moral nature learns to discard one manner of life after another as he discovers the evil. But what helps him upwards is not the thing he discards, but the moral faith and resolution with which he deals with the whole of his life. The criminal of our day does not correspond to the good man of the Stone Age, but to the criminal of that period. He is one who, turning aside from the higher way, chooses that which is for his own period, and, in the circumstances in which he finds himself, the lower way. Any other view is surely due to a superficial attention to the external and accidental in human life, and a disregard of the inner principle which is at work in all moral living. It is not true, then, to say that the virtue of one age is the vice of the next. Goodness is always to be found in the will which chooses the good, because it presents itself as the good and rejects that which is the mere gratification of self-regarding impulse. Whatever shape the external act may take, the moral quality resides in the inner character of the will. For man, at whatever stage of development he may be, there is a good to be chosen and an evil to be rejected. We gain nothing, then, in the way of explanation of the nature of evil, by going back up the stream of time and comparing the actions of the men of old with those of the men of to-day. The problem of evil remains where it was.

We cannot, then, elude the problem of evil by any of the devices by which it has been attempted to prove that evil is an unreality. We cannot escape the difficulty by denying its existence. Evil is a fact, the most tremendous fact in all human experience, a fact which must be faced courageously if we are to retain our faith in a supreme beneficent purpose pervading

all experience. Is the universe, in its final meaning and tendency, good? Is life worth living? Is the hope which springs up so continually in human hearts justifiable, or is it a delusion? Have all the strivings and conquests of the good and great in all ages of history been making for an end eminently worthy of their efforts, or has it been all in vain? Is there a goal set before us which will be found at last to have been worth every sacrifice which the martyrs and heroes among men have ever been ready to make in the faith that their endeavours would not be fruitless? Finally, is the fact of evil reconcilable with the belief in the supreme wisdom and goodness of God?

There are two distinct questions here. First, accepting the fact, the reality, of evil, are we justified in believing that it will be finally overcome? Secondly, how is the fact of evil to be reconciled with our belief in God?

These two questions are not necessarily connected. It is possible to believe in the final overthrow of evil without believing in God. Evil, regarded as discord in human social relationship, the opposition of the individual will to the common good, might be gradually eliminated by a growing sense of brotherhood and an increasing willingness on the part of all to make sacrifices for the general welfare.

Glorious dreams of such a consummation have charmed many imaginations and inspired many enthusiastic souls. A redemption of humanity wrought out by self-sacrifice and issuing in a regenerated society is the ideal which has stimulated all our modern social reformers. Even though the full realization of the ideal may seem a long way off, the possibility of effecting any real approximation towards it is enough

to call forth all the energies of those who have been fascinated by the splendour of the vision. The belief in such a possibility is in itself the equivalent of a glorious hope.

Yet it must be admitted that, apart from a deeper faith as to the ultimate nature of things, experience and history speak with uncertain voice as to the probability of success. In modern, as in ancient, times many noble individuals may be found who willingly sacrifice themselves for the general welfare ; but there is little to show that large classes and whole races will act in the same way. It cannot be forgotten that competition is a very large factor in evolution. Even though it may not prove to be as dominant as Darwin believed, it cannot be wholly eliminated. It may be true that, among individuals, the rigour of competition may be greatly softened. People belonging to the same family or race, or united in common bonds of fellowship and labour, may so far overcome their eagerness as to soften away the worst asperities : the influences of comradeship, of fair play, of mutual goodwill, may prevail over the oppositions arising from competing interests. But competition between large and distinct classes and races seems to admit of a very much smaller degree of limitation. The present war is a gigantic illustration of the manner in which national interests, when they come into competition, destroy international good-will. International law becomes in a moment a mere cobweb.

It is a remarkable thing that this should occur at a time when, more than ever before in human experience, attention was being given to the solution of social problems, and a higher degree of mutual respect and consideration was being established among all peoples.

The fact makes us realize the truth that, except on the basis of religious faith, there is really no reason why human progress should in the future move in the direction of universal brotherhood rather than in any other direction. Looking back over the history of organic evolution, we trace the appearance and disappearance of whole races of living beings, we see the struggle for life going on, we watch ascent and descent; and we conclude that, regarding the human species as only the highest in the series, we have no special reason to believe that love is any better than strength, as a factor making for survival, or that the human race may not decline rather than improve, or that the application of physical science to the uses of life may not in the end turn out to be a curse rather than a blessing. The range of ideas which find their most forcible expression in the writings of Nietzsche, and which dominate many minds at present, form an interesting commentary on this conclusion.

These considerations show that practically the problem of evil is the supreme burden which presses upon us as we take up the duties of life and seek to estimate their meaning and value ; and they show that ordinary experience and scientific thought provide no solution to the great problem.

Is there any other way of approaching the question? Most certainly there is, if there is any truth in the principles which we were able to reach in our examination of the conditions of human experience as a whole. It will be seen that, though we have not the means of solving the great problem, we are able to understand why it is insoluble ; and, further, we can see reason to believe that, above the level to which our minds can attain, there is a solution of it.

We saw that the experience of the individual human being possesses a reality of higher degree than that possessed by the material world. Also we saw that the unity which belongs to this higher reality is of higher degree than the unity which belongs to the lower. It is more intimate, more concrete. The elements which go to form the higher unity enter into one another in a manner impossible to the elements of the lower. Contradictions which cannot be resolved in the latter disappear in the former. Things which stand apart from one another in hopeless antagonism as elements in the material world unite in the spiritual experience of the personal self. The mutually exclusive things of the physical world form one world in human experience, a world penetrated through and through by the thoughts and purposes of the spirit.

Further, we saw that when from individual human experience we pass to the consideration of the multitude of finite human experiences, it is necessary to suppose a unity of still higher degree in which they are combined. Only by this supposition can all the varying human points of view, all the partial experiences of men, all the worlds which men know, each regarding the world of experience in his own way, find a synthesis in a universe including them all. As Nature must be regarded as a world of which the natural world as revealed in every finite experience is a partial manifestation, so must there be a Universal Spiritual Life in which all finite spirits share. Here is a degree of reality higher than that of human experience.

In this Highest Reality, as we must regard it, we must believe that the contradictions which belong to the relationships of finite spirits disappear. As the

oppositions of material things vanish in human experience, so do the oppositions of finite experiences vanish in the Highest Reality. The analogy of the lower realities leads inevitably to this conclusion.

The oppositions and contradictions between finite spirits find their characteristic expression in the problem of evil. Evil is the conflict of wills in its most pronounced form. It is spirit making use of its own peculiar power in antagonism to the same power exercised by other spirits. Here intellect, an instrument forged for the uses of the lower realities, is necessarily powerless. It is unable to effect a reconciliation. Hence the insoluble problem which has baffled all generations of thinkers. Hence the impossibility of thinking out the relations which the problem involves. But it does not follow that there is no solution. On the contrary, when we are convinced that there is a realm of Reality higher than that of human experience, it follows at once that we have reason to believe that in that Reality the oppositions which perplex us utterly find a perfect resolution. This is no mere appeal to another world and another power to settle problems which distract ourselves. It is a conclusion to which all the lines of thought which we have been following from the beginning lead inevitably.

When, therefore, Christian faith holds with all its strength to both sides of the question, affirming on the one hand the sovereign omnipotence of God and on the other the freedom of human will, and at the same time maintains that the puzzle which we cannot solve finds its solution in Him, it is acting with a wisdom which philosophy must ultimately justify. Its instinct is directed by the appreciation of the importance of grasping all the facts, letting none of them

slip, because to the impatient human intelligence they seem incapable of reconciliation. It is also inspired by the conviction, which common experience so amply bears out, that our knowledge of these greatest things must be subject to limitations.

When we come to see the necessity of this highest reality and most perfect unity, we find the justification of all our hopes as to the final outcome of the moral struggle in this limited life of ours. There can be no ultimate defeat of the good. Every life is worth living and every sacrifice is worth making. The evil which on the level of our experience presents itself as a reality so tremendous that it seems to threaten the very existence of the spiritual universe, is revealed as an element which must, for the Highest Reality, be altogether subordinate. The fact that in the final unity all discords must cease involves the disappearance of evil in the last resort.

In this discussion we have to some extent anticipated the examination of the second of the two questions which we found to require consideration. This was inevitable, because the two questions are finally one. But it is necessary now to go back to the parting of the ways, for there are some points of great importance which still demand attention. The second question was stated in the following terms: How is the fact of evil to be reconciled with our belief in God?

We have seen that those who regard this great problem from the point of view of natural history and ordinary human experience might rest content if they could show that the general tendency of things is such that, in course of time, as development proceeds, evil will be gradually overcome and goodness and happiness prevail on the whole. The naturalistic type of thought

can, indeed, seek no other solution. Its defect is that the welfare of the individual counts for nothing. Countless human beings must be sacrificed to Moloch in order that the race may be better and happier at some future time. Such a doctrine cannot satisfy the higher needs of the human heart. It is, indeed, inconsistent with the fundamental principle of the moral life—the principle that every human soul is an end in himself, possessed of an absolute moral value. It is therefore altogether unsatisfying to minds which recognize the importance of the spiritual side of human life. Unsatisfying as this doctrine is in any case, we found that it is impossible, even from the point of view of natural science and ordinary experience, to find any real justification for it. There is no real reason from a naturalistic standpoint for the belief that the evil will be overcome. The one principle which can bring deliverance is that of a Higher Reality, a spiritual life in which the contradictions which belong to this life shall be vanquished—that is, faith in God is our only way of salvation.

All is not yet clear, however. When we seek deliverance from this great perplexity in the doctrine which has just been set forth, there comes back upon us an old question in a new shape. If in this new sense we accept the doctrine that God is omnipotent and perfectly good, how does it help us in relation to our present life? Evil is a fact. It is, for that level of reality which belongs to our human existence, a terribly real thing. The belief that for God there is a higher level on which this terrible thing vanishes is not much comfort for us who have to live our lives on the lower level. Further, there is, it will be said, no more assurance of final victory to be found in this

doctrine than in any other; for, if the present existence of evil on the level of reality on which we live is not inconsistent with the perfection of God's life on the higher level on which He lives, why should not evil go on for ever? Why should it disappear in the future any more than in the present?*

The defect of these arguments is that they regard God as a purely intellectual Absolute. They omit to consider His Personality and His moral character. In logic, a higher principle will resolve a contradiction. The warring elements disappear in a harmony which includes and reconciles them. Action and reaction in mechanics are equal and opposite. For this very reason they contribute to the strength of any mechanical system which involves them. That system is a harmony resulting from the counteracting efficacy of opposite forces. But consider each pair of forces in isolation from the whole, and their push against one another is revealed as a continually acting opposition.

So, it might seem, in the final harmony which is realized in God, the Highest Reality, the opposition of good and evil may be a necessary element. We poor creatures of lower nature feel, and must continue to feel, all the agonies which we describe as sorrow and sin, all the tortures of bodily pain, mental disquietude, disappointed hopes, ceaseless competition with one

* The discussion of these questions involves points raised by Mr. Bradley in his *Appearance and Reality* (see chaps. xvii., xix., xxv.), and by Dr. McTaggart in his *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 209 *ff.* Mr. Bradley holds that personality and morality are completely transcended in the Absolute. They are for Him wholly subordinate. Dr. McTaggart finds omnipotence incompatible with personality and morality. The form in which the conception of degrees of reality is presented above seems to get rid of all these difficulties.

another, oppositions, disagreements, strife, and war, in order that, in the higher realm of the Divine Being, there may be eternal harmony, unbroken peace.

Mr. Bradley's conception of the Absolute is very close to this. But he wisely sees that, for a modern thinker, such a being could not be called God.

God cannot be an Absolute of this kind. Nor can the Absolute bear such a character. What has happened here is that the metaphysical mind has let logic run away with it. The forms and processes of thought which are perfectly valid when applied to mechanical things, and which in that application lead to results which stand every test of verification, are not safe guides when we are dealing with realities of higher order. The teaching of Bergson is here most important.

The truth is that the conceptions which belong to personal life—the ideas of morality especially—are here much closer to the facts than the forms of intellectual logic. If we think of God as the Absolute, we shall get our truest conceptions of Him by applying to Him those human qualities and principles which our common experience has shown to be essential to all that is highest and best in humanity. The simple, devout soul who thinks of God as Father, as supremely trustworthy, as worthy of highest reverence and adoration, as Love, as a Personal Being in whom all perfection of moral character is realized, is far nearer to the truth than is the philosopher who painfully follows the dialectic of the Hegelian logic, and reaches the absolute idea in which all contradiction disappears.

The reason is perfectly clear. The reality which belongs to our human personal life is higher in degree than the reality in relation to which our intellectual logic has been shaped. A perfect instrument in its

own sphere, this logic is unable to deal with the movement of life, as Bergson has shown. It is unable to deal with the full reality of the moving *continuum* of our human conscious experience. How much greater must its limitations be when it is applied to the Reality which transcends our experience!

In relation to this latter Reality, the only clue we have is the nature of our own personal life when regarded as a movement towards its own proper perfection. We have seen that the Highest Reality must be personal; but that personality cannot be a complete account of His nature. We have also seen that personality must, in Him, reach a perfection far beyond anything known to us. Just as material organization reaches its highest perfection when taken up into personal life, as in the human organism, so must personality, the characteristic form of our conscious experience, reach its highest perfection when involved in the Higher Reality.

The perfection of His Personality is therefore the one thing we can really know about God. All that constitutes personal perfection must be found in Him.

It follows that we are right to speak of God as good in the highest degree, and we are right to expect to find that, in spite of all difficulties, the course of our human experience and the whole universe, so far as we can explore it, reveal marks of a supreme goodness. Since the level of reality on which our experience moves is lower in degree than that of the life of God, we must expect difficulties and the appearance of contradiction; but the good as we find it in ourselves and in the world of men should be more fundamental in its nature and relation to the whole than the evil.

Now, this is exactly what we do find, as the following considerations will show :

First, our whole life, all our thoughts and all our actions, depend upon the trustworthiness of the universe in which we dwell. We act upon the supposition that what is true to-day will be true to-morrow, and find that we are not deceived. The whole system of the physical sciences is founded on the uniformity of Nature. Hence comes the conception of natural law. The world is a cosmos, not chaos. Order is more fundamental than disorder. Also, as we saw in an earlier discussion, the material world is such in relation to us, and we are so constituted in relation to it, that we can use its forces and laws for our own purposes. Matter subserves mind. This relationship is clearly more fundamental than those which produce disorder, distraction, dislocation. Health is more natural than disease. Harmony is more natural than discord.

Secondly, in the moral world we find, as was shown above, that goodness is more fundamental than evil. Though it be true that in relation to our conscious experience we cannot call evil an unreality, yet in relation to goodness its position is subordinate. If there is to be such a thing as social life at all, if human beings are to live in relation to one another, there must be some basis of mutual trust, which is impossible without some sort or degree of morality. The complete prevalence of evil would involve the destruction of all life which could properly be called human. Goodness is therefore essential : evil is not.

Thirdly, when dealing with the problem of pain, we were able to show from the psychology of that question that pleasure has an essential relation to life which

pain has not. Pain is the mark of disturbance, the accompaniment of the upward struggle; and in human experience is specially connected with freedom of choice. It is an element which heightens all moral values, a price we pay for our moral victories.

These considerations bear out the conclusion at which we have arrived. The Life in whose all-embracing Being we live, the Highest Reality, is Good. We have reason to attribute to Him all our best conceptions of Personal Perfection. These conceptions are doubtless not good enough, but they are the truest expression of which we are capable.

While therefore we are unable to solve the problem of evil, we can see reason to believe that it is solved in God. Evil cannot be a permanent element in the universe. The whole course of natural and human development must be working towards an end in which evil will have no place. A God whose nature involves personal perfection cannot build His own eternal happiness on the lasting misery of His creatures. It is impossible. It will surely be found at last that the good will be perfected and the evil utterly destroyed.

CHAPTER IX

FREEDOM AND PURPOSE

In a mechanical system, past and present govern the future absolutely. Given the present position of the sun, moon, and other celestial bodies, and knowing the laws which govern their movements, the astronomer can tell exactly where they will be a thousand years hence. Eclipses, conjunctions, transits, and other relalative positions can be calculated with extraordinary exactness. On this principle the operation of every machine depends. Putting together properly constructed parts and depending on ascertained laws, the engineer forms an instrument upon the working of which he can rely. If it goes wrong and does not effect the results he desired, his confidence in the laws of mechanics is not in the least shaken. He merely understands that there was some fault in adjustment: the very failure will, he knows, turn out to be a further instance of the perfect necessity with which past and present govern the future.

This principle is found to prevail throughout the whole domain of physical science, so far as human investigation has been able to penetrate. Hence comes our idea of natural necessity: each stage arises inevitably out of all that went before: the future is determined by the past: everything is in its nature essentially calculable and foreseeable.

When, however, we think of such mechanical systems from the point of view of our own conscious use of them, we must reverse the order. The future is found to govern past and present. An event which will happen to-morrow controlled the processes of yesterday, and controls the processes of to-day. The newspaper which will be published next Saturday is keeping the printing-press at work on Thursday. Here it is clear that the reversal of the mechanical order is brought about by the intervention of human mind and will. Natural processes are made to subserve intelligent purpose.

The principle which thus comes to light pervades all human life, in so far as conscious mind and will prevail. The events of the present are all controlled by the future. As long as the intelligent direction of life is taking place, so long does the future dominate all my actions. I must write a dozen letters in the next hour, because lunch will be at one o'clock. I am very busy to-day because I must go to town to-morrow. The train must start at nine o'clock, because it is timed to arrive at its destination at half-past ten. All the mechanisms which are employed in the train's journey must be adjusted with reference to an event which will not happen until that hour. It is altogether in the future, yet it rules a long series of events which will then be past.

It is important to observe that the greater the power of the future in a man's life, the greater his freedom. When a man becomes the victim of habit, his past controls him. As long as he is able consciously to choose his own ends and direct his course towards their attainment, he is free. In thus directing himself he subordinates to his purpose mechanical processes of

many kinds, making them the slaves of his will. All these mechanical processes, with the forces and laws they involve, are thus made subject to a consciously chosen end not yet realized. Here is freedom as the truth of necessity. The aim of the will is the explanation of the whole series of mechanically necessitated events.

When the relation of mind to mechanism is thus presented, it is almost inevitable that the principle so revealed should be applied to the great mechanisms of Nature. If in our experience we find conscious purpose to be the explanation of such mechanical processes as we can set in motion, surely there is reason to believe that the physical world as a whole is designed with a view to some supreme end. We can hardly fail to discern, in the necessity of nature, the manifestation of the process by which a world-wide purpose is being accomplished. We saw above that this is an argument of very great potency. But we also saw that it leads to great difficulties when we come to consider the relation of Divine to human freedom. Into that question we need not now enter, as it has been already dealt with sufficiently for our present needs.

The problem now before us is different. What is meant by Purpose when the word is used in connection with the whole movement of things? Or, to narrow the scope of our inquiry, what is meant by Purpose when we regard the full concrete reality of our conscious experience? It may be that we are being led astray by the analogy of the mechanical process. Have we reason to suppose that the whole life-process, the movement of the full activity of our conscious experience, has the same character as those abstracted and

isolated parts of it which we single out when we watch the attainment of a definitely conceived end by means of a mechanical arrangement specially designed to produce it? Kant maintained that the phenomenal activity of the will is not to be regarded as its real activity. The former is necessary, the latter free. Bergson has carried Kant's distinction further. He holds that phenomenal time must be distinguished from pure, or real, time. All mechanical processes are in the former; they belong to time, as marked out in definite quantities by reference to space. Will in the full sense of the term, the movement of the conscious life in all its fulness, is in the latter. It is free, not being bound by the spatial limitations which belong to the material world.

According to Bergson, the very conception of finalism is misleading when applied to our conscious experience. It is a category which belongs to the realm of intellect. "The human intellect, inasmuch as it is fashioned for the needs of human action, is an intellect which proceeds at the same time by intention and by calculation, by adapting means to ends, and by thinking out mechanisms of more and more geometrical form. Whether nature be conceived as an immense machine regulated by mathematical laws, or as the realization of a plan, these two ways of regarding it are only the consummation of two tendencies of mind which are complementary to each other, and which have their origin in the same vital necessities. For that reason, radical finalism is very near radical mechanism on many points. Both doctrines are reluctant to see in the course of things generally, or even simply in the development of life, an unforeseeable creation of form. In considering reality, mechanism regards only the

aspect of similarity or repetition. It is therefore dominated by this law, that in nature there is only *like* reproducing *like*. . . . Fabrication works on models which it sets out to reproduce; and even when it invents, it proceeds, or imagines itself to proceed, by a new arrangement of elements already known. Its principle is that 'we must have like to produce like.' In short, the strict application of the principle of finality, like that of the principle of mechanical causality, leads to the conclusion that 'all is given.' Both principles say the same thing in their respective languages, because they respond to the same need."*

As against the rigidity which intellect thus introduces on both sides of our dealing with things, M. Bergson holds that life in its real nature is fluid and creative. It is continually new, always producing that which is unforeseeable. Its true character can be described neither by mechanism nor by finalism. It is not the working out of a plan settled beforehand. It possesses genuine freedom. But M. Bergson does not deny that finalism stands for a truth which approaches the facts of the case more nearly than does the conception of mechanism. Life, he holds, starts with a direction. It has a tendency. But it is not the realization of a plan. "It is a creation which goes on for ever in virtue of an initial movement. This movement constitutes the unity of the organized world—a prolific unity of an infinite richness, superior to any that the intellect could dream of, for the intellect is only one of its aspects or products."† What is determinative, then, in the course of creation, is not an end or final cause, consciously aimed at, but the unity of the

* *Creative Evolution*, chap. i., pp. 47, 48.

† *Ibid.*, chap. ii., p. 110.

original impetus. This *élan vital*, which is the true reality, pushes against the opposing material medium in which it has to operate. Thus it gives rise to myriad forms, forms and arrangements infinite in number and variety. Thus also there is an all-pervading unity which, to our intellectual examination, presents a superficial appearance of prearranged design. But this unity, with its appearance of finalism, can only be detected when we look backwards to the past and observe what has been accomplished. Looking towards the future, we are confronted with the unforeseeable. We must believe that the unity of the impetus will remain. But we have no reason to believe that there is any definite goal towards which that impetus is tending. This, according to M. Bergson, is borne out by the fact of the increasing divergence of living forms. "In communicating itself, the impetus splits up more and more. Life, in proportion to its progress, is scattered in manifestations which undoubtedly owe to their common origin the fact that they are complementary to each other in certain aspects, but which are none the less mutually incompatible and antagonistic. So the discord between species will go on increasing." "No doubt there is progress, if progress mean a continual advance in the general direction determined by a first impulsion; but this progress is accomplished only on two or three great lines of evolution, on which forms ever more and more complex, ever more and more high, appear. Between these lines run a crowd of minor paths in which, on the contrary, deviations, arrests, and set-backs are multiplied. The philosopher, who begins by laying down as a principle that each detail is connected with some general plan of the whole, goes from one disap-

pointment to another as soon as he comes to examine the facts ; and, as he had put everything in the same rank, he finds that, as the result of not allowing for accident, he must regard everything as accidental."*

Thus M. Bergson explains his reason for believing that in creation "the unity is derived from a *vis a tergo:* it is given at the start as an impulsion, not placed at the end as an attraction." But, for this very reason, he holds that "Nature is more and better than a plan in course of realization. A plan is a term assigned to a labour : it closes the future whose form it indicates. Before the evolution of life, on the contrary, the portals of the future remain wide open."†

In dealing with these statements and arguments, it is necessary to remember that in M. Bergson's philosophy our conscious experience, as developing in pure time, is life in its most perfect form ; and that the clue to the meaning of the whole is to be found here. This being so, I think we must conclude that, for the solution of the problem before us, and especially when we are dealing with M. Bergson's discussion of it, the essential nature of our own experience is a much better guide than the observation of what happens among the lower grades of living creatures. The question before us is, Does life aim at a goal ? Is it animated by a purpose ? Or is it aimlessly pushing in any direction which lies open to it ? Life is free and creative. Is there any reason to believe that its creative energy is striving towards an end which is worth while ? Or is the whole idea of end meaningless in relation to it ?

When we consider the vast multitudes and infinite variety of the lower forms of living creatures, and the

* *Op. cit.*, chap. ii., pp. 109, 110. † *Op. cit.*, p. 110.

prodigal way in which the intricate and beautiful developments which are produced through countless generations are permitted to perish, we might well be led to think of life as aimless except in relation to its immediate effort of adaptation. But surely this may be due to the fact that here we are viewing an immense world-wide process at a point so far back that we can gain no conception of its real meaning, if it has a meaning. When we turn from the lower forms of life to man, we gain a point of view far more advanced. We may well expect that, in his life, there will appear indications of the meaning and purpose of the whole, if the ideas meaning and purpose have any application at all to the vital process.

The first question we have to deal with is that which has just been indicated. Has the conception of end, or final cause, any meaning in relation to life in its full reality, or is it entirely belonging to the mechanized scientific intellect? The answer surely is not difficult. A man can set before himself ends which have to be attained by means of mechanical adjustments. But he can also set before himself ends which are purely spiritual, and to be attained by spiritual means, means which in some cases involve no consciously contrived mechanical process at all. All moral attainment is of this character. The end may be a state of the man's own being. It may be a social relationship. When a man sets out to win the love or friendship of another, the reality of the end at which he aims is very clear. In the pursuit of it, he may employ many a subordinate mechanical process, but the process itself is of higher character throughout, and the end is one which involves the man's whole being. This illustration is important, as it seems to

bring out more fully the meaning of M. Bergson's own doctrine of freedom. According to him, man is free when he acts with the full reality of his being. Freedom belongs to the onward movement of the man's whole life. But are we to suppose that, in the case of man, this movement is a striving anyhow, an aimless wandering, a bumping into whatever obstacle first presents itself? Surely not. Freedom in man involves self-direction. It *is* self-direction. That is its very nature. And self-direction involves an aim—that is, an end to be realized.

We must therefore be very clear that while, in all mechanical processes as we use them for our own purposes, the explanation of the whole is to be found in the end, this end, or final cause, is not a mere correlative of mechanism, a mere form of the scientific intellect. On the contrary, it belongs to the very nature of our full conscious experience, the highest reality we can lay hold of. It is just for this reason that we can speak of the spirit of man dominating mechanism and using it for his own purposes.

There seems to be, then, some confusion in M. Bergson's doctrine. His teaching on the subject of freedom in his *Essai sur les Données* seems to go beyond his doctrine of the *élan vital* as developed in his *L'Évolution Créatrice*.

Further, M. Bergson would seem to have been somewhat led astray by the unifying, philosophizing tendency which beguiles all philosophers. He is so set upon the exhibition of the unity of all life, that he omits to give proper weight to the inner value which all conscious things possess for themselves. Whatever is capable of inner enjoyment has value for itself. There is an inherent finalism in living creatures. The

mere capacity for feeling, the mere possibility of the experience of pleasure and pain, still more the possession of desires or impulses which seek for conscious satisfaction: all these give to the subject of them a value which is intrinsic. To enjoy pleasure, to escape pain, to satisfy desire, is worth while for its own sake. It belongs to the nature of such experiences to have value. When, therefore, we see Nature, as we term it, producing vast multitudes of living beings possessing this capacity of finding enjoyment in themselves, we need not, in our pursuit of a complete system of finalism, demand that every one of them must find a place in a great scheme of rationally connected elements in which every element contributes to the whole result. The myriad beautiful forms of living things which life has produced along all its lines of development, and which have passed away, were all worth producing for their own sake. It is probable, surely, that their beauty and perfection were all expressive of, and contributory to, their own enjoyment. We have seen that the due exercise of normal natural functions is the condition of pleasure. And, in addition to all this, if it be true, as we have seen reason to believe, that all these lower manifestations of life have their place in a great enveloping conscious and superconscious life, we must also believe that their existence and inner enjoyment possess, for Him also, an intrinsic worth.

This conclusion is strongly reinforced by another part of M. Bergson's work—his examination of instinct. According to him, and his arguments are very convincing, consciousness has developed along two distinct lines in its dealing with the material environment of living organisms. Instinct is not an imperfect form of intelligence. On the contrary, instinct in its own

limited sphere is a more perfect instrument than intelligence. It operates more certainly and immediately. Intelligence involves pause, hesitation, calculation, deliberation, choice of means. Instinct acts at once. Apprehension of the object which has to be dealt with is followed by an immediate response of the exact sort necessary. This response is often dependent for its appropriateness upon most complicated arrangements—past, present, and future. So it is that the Yucca moth lays its eggs on the ovules of the Yucca flower, and then carefully fertilizes the pistil with pollen, so that the seeds of the plant may feed its young, and yet carries out the operation in such a way that all the seeds shall not be destroyed. "The insect acts as though it knew that its larva would require ripe seed of the Yucca, as though it knew that this could only be obtained by fertilization, as though it knew that ripe seed is also necessary for the continuance of the existence of the Yucca plants, and therefore for the activity of Yucca moths ; and yet it is manifestly impossible that it can possess this knowledge, much less acquire it in any intelligible sense of the word 'knowledge.'"* Multitudes of such instances can be given from the history of the insect creation.

The extraordinary complication of such cases might lead a hasty thinker to imagine that the whole process involved in an adaptation of this kind must be mechanical and quite independent of the intervention of mental factors. But further thought will show that such explanation is impossible. Every case of instinct will be found on examination to involve some moment at which definite awareness must intervene. There is always a psychic element. If it is not conscious, in our

* Wildon Carr, *Bergson* (The People's Books), pp. 37, 38.

full human sense of that word, it is certainly not unconscious. It is mental, not material. The nearest approach to it in our experience is perhaps to be found in those less perfect instincts which we ourselves possess, or, perhaps still more probably, in that immediate knowledge which we have of the whole current of our conscious life, the "intuition" of which M. Bergson has taught us to think.

Whatever instinct may involve, it seems certain that it is an immediate knowledge of actions to be performed in certain circumstances. But these actions are not isolated facts. They are always performed with reference to some result to be attained, some useful end achieved or some mischief averted. They are intensely purposive. Life, then, working as mind in this special way of instinct, is ever engaged in adjusting conditions with a view to the attainment of ends. In it, as in our consciously intelligent life, the future governs the present. A result to be achieved sets in motion long and complicated processes, involving the intervention of psychic factors.

It is surely clear, then, that purposiveness, the adaptation of means to ends, is not a mere working principle of intelligence. It is not a mere element in that intellectual system which, according to M. Bergson, has come into being in order to help us to deal with matter. Intuition itself, if instinct be a form of intuition, works by means of the same principle. End, purpose, guidance by a future to be realized, is involved apparently in all the dealings of life with its material environment, whether those dealings are carried on through intellect or not.

The operations of instinct, like those of intelligence, partly subserve the well-being of the individual and

partly that of the race. But it would appear that instinct is, on the whole, less self-seeking than intelligence. It operates, with unerring immediacy, for the good of the future of the species. While, in the creature's own inner life, the performance of its normal functions, carried on instinctively, is a source of some degree of pleasure or inner satisfaction, the wonderful adjustments which those functions involve have to do very largely with the race. Instinct therefore, while fulfilling an immediate purpose in the life of the individual, carries with it a far larger purpose, a purpose which connects generation with generation, and has to do with life as a whole. Thus, instinct effects immediately the identification of the individual aim with the general good.

Intelligence, on the other hand, supplies no such identification. It is apt to be consciously and distinctively self-seeking. With the emergence of intellect comes also the deliberate choosing between various possible alternatives. The conscious subject has to pause and think. Hence the distinction between the good and bad, or between a less good and a greater good, and the necessity of deciding which is the true aim in every grouping of circumstances. Here is the beginning of evil. As moral progress goes on, this choice becomes, in many cases, a decision between a good for self only, and a good which includes others also. The temptation arises to choose that end which will satisfy the individual desire only. It is a temptation often yielded to. The larger good is forgotten, and the power of intellect is employed to set up selfish interest against the welfare of the community or that of the race.

It thus appears that life as manifested in intelli-

gence, while always involving the pursuit of ends, is liable to a restriction of aim peculiar to itself. So far from standing alone in its use of the principle of final causes, it is not as large nor as consistent in this respect as other manifestations.

In it, however, comes to light the consciousness of self as that which definitely and knowingly aims at its own satisfaction. No doubt the desires of other living creatures drive them on to the attainment of the objects which correspond to their needs. The hunger of an animal is as powerful an impulse as the hunger of a man. But it would seem that in the conscious seeking of satisfaction, man alone is able to present the object to himself in thought as that which he requires for himself. The bearing of this fact on our present discussion demands some consideration.

This principle of value for self reaches its climax, so far as our experience extends, in the moral being of man. It is of the very essence of the self in man to seek for self-realization, and to seek it in some end. This is no mere exercise of the mechanized intelligence. That intelligence, as M. Bergson has taught us, is an instrument by which the self subdues the material environment of the organism and controls certain elements of that environment for its own purposes. But these purposes are never merely material. They always have some relation to self-satisfaction. The mechanical processes subserve the onward movement of the whole life: they are subordinate elements in the whole conscious experience, and that experience moves forward by ever demanding fresh satisfactions for the self. The ends, the purposes, belong, therefore, to the fulness of the concrete reality.

As a social being, man finds that his true satisfac-

tion can only be realized in ends which he shares with the society to which he belongs. Thus arises the whole moral life.

It is surely clear, then, that the onward movement of life as we find it in our own experience, and which we must regard as the realization of our freedom as spiritual beings, is no mere aimless pushing outward in whatever direction we find to be possible. It is a movement dominated by ends, a movement in which the future controls the present. It is not a blind thrusting forward in obedience to a *vis a tergo*, but the following of a light which goes before.

Does this conclusion bring us back to the old difficulty so convincingly stated by M. Bergson, when he contends that "radical finalism" implies that "all is given," that it reduces life to the mere carrying out of a plan settled beforehand? Does it do away with the "unforeseeableness" which he demands as characteristic of the freedom of the living movement? At first sight it may seem to do so, but a more careful examination will show that it does not.

It is only the subordinate ends, the ends which form the termination of mechanical processes, which are given beforehand. The real end is never so given. When man is dealing with a series of physical causes and effects, he can, if his calculations and manipulations are accurate, realize his plan with perfect accuracy. All is given in these cases. But when he comes to the application of such results to the uses of life, and still more when he is dealing with moral and social situations, his forecast is always different from his attainment. It is not too much to say that in this, the sphere of man's real life, the future is never given beforehand. The end when attained always turns out

to be something different from what he aimed at, always something more than he planned. Of the most successful men in the world, it must be said that when they have won the prizes they set out to seek, their gains are never exactly coincident with their anticipations. And this is true, not merely in the sense that beforehand they failed to consider all the circumstances, but in the sense that every such enjoyment when gained is different in enjoyment from what it is in anticipation. The living experience, in its true quality, is always unforeseeable and incapable of representation. Just as a past experience, when called up and presented in thought, is different from what it was when actually lived, so a future experience is different in anticipation from what it is found to be when realized as an actuality. And as, under M. Bergson's guidance, we discerned that our freedom in the present is indicated by this very fact, that the living experience is always different from every possible representation of it, and would therefore be incalculable by the most powerful intellect who knew all the conditions beforehand, so we see that the fact that we present to ourselves ends and seek to realize them, does not involve the predetermination of our actual experience.

The nature of the ends which we set before ourselves is well worth considering in the light of what has just been stated. I determine to read a book. Is my experience in reading the book ever capable of being foretold? Surely not. The nature of that experience, the pleasure or pain that I get from it, the thoughts it stirs in me, or the sleep it induces: these in their actual quality formed no part of my original design. Only in a general way can I say, when I compare

anticipation with enjoyment, that I have been satisfied or disappointed. The total result even, its influence upon my mind and character, is as incalculable in the present as it was unforeseeable in the past. The living experience is always unique, yet it comes to me in the pursuit of ends conceived beforehand.

When we seek illustrations of a more perfectly human kind, instances in which the result depends upon action and reaction among various individuals, we find a far greater difference between anticipation and realization. I wish to visit a friend for the sheer enjoyment of his company. The fact that I intend to see him to-morrow is so potent, as a future which governs my present, that I have to rearrange all my engagements to-day. It is an end which shapes a considerable portion of my life. Yet how wholly impossible it is to apply to such an experience the rule that because it is an end definitely aimed at, therefore "all is given." When I see my friend and spend some hours in his company, the interplay of mind with mind, the response of heart to heart, the association of purpose with purpose, create a whole of experience which was unforeseen and unforeseeable. Every single case of social intercourse would furnish a like example. Even the happiest marriage is different in realization from every possible anticipation.

It does not follow, then, that because our whole life is directed by the pursuit of consciously conceived ends, therefore it is the realization of a programme arranged beforehand.

It is well worth while giving some further thought to the nature of the ends which lure men on to their experience of life. The most fruitful field for our investigation is that supplied by our moral and social

life. Here is the realm of all that is, in the truest and most proper sense, human.

The moral aim is frequently described as the common good. The description will serve our present purpose admirably. Its meaning is that, in moral conduct, a man seeks an end which realizes himself and at the same time realizes others. He identifies his own good with the general welfare. Now, suppose a man consciously to apply this principle to some particular action. He will say to himself, for example, "I must do this thing, because if I don't it will be bad for us all. I must join the army for this war: if men like me hold back the country will be lost, all humanity will suffer." Such a man,

> "Obedient to the light
> That shines within his soul."

enters upon a whole world of experience which is absolutely unforeseeable. He takes the risk of a stupendous adventure. Yet the end he sets before himself is perfectly clear. That end is the good of men, the general welfare. In what does this general welfare consist? Speaking largely, it is the harmony of human souls. It is a social cosmos in which the good, or realization, of every individual is identified with the good of every other individual. Everyone is an end in himself; and the whole social order is a harmonization of interests in which that truth is fully recognized. Whether such an order could ever exist as a fact is not the question. The point is, that the moral ideal which makes a man sacrifice himself for the general welfare must, when worked out in accordance with our moral experience, assume this form. A social order in which the individual were completely subordinated to the whole regarded as a system, as

the bee is sacrificed for the hive, would not be moral in the human sense. Nor, again, would a system in which the individual were sacrificed for the future of the race present a pattern for moral imitation. To be moral in the proper sense, a social order must recognize the rights and freedom of every human person. The moral order is founded upon the principle of personality. Only in an ideal of the sort indicated above, the conception of an order in which every person is regarded as an end in himself, can the moral life of man find its essential characterization. This is the kingdom of God at which every true action aims, towards which every moral life is directed. The supreme end is the harmony of souls.

Now, it is quite evident that an ideal of this kind is not a plan given beforehand. Its realization may assume an indefinitely great number of forms. It might be compared with an equation of indefinite power involving a practically limitless possibility of solution. Leibnitz described the Deity as creating the best of all possible worlds. It would not be wrong to describe the moral aim in human life as a striving to realize the best of all possible solutions of a world-problem in which the factors are practically infinite, success in that great endeavour depending upon the bringing into a final harmony of a vast multitude of wills, each one of which is possessed of freedom.

This last-named condition shows how utterly insufficient is the illustration of the equation. In that illustration we have but a faint indication of the complexity of the problem.

These considerations show how utterly inapplicable to the whole movement of the moral life of man is the

conception of it as the working out of a plan prepared beforehand. The future is not settled in advance, yet the idea of a future settlement on certain principles forms the guiding star of the whole.

What is settled is a certain kind of relationship amongst spiritual beings, a relationship which can be characterized as goodness, or a harmony of wills. In this connection it must be remembered that we have experience of one principle at least which can guide and harmonize human wills without destroying their freedom: that principle is Love. If we describe the all-inclusive aim of the whole universe of spiritual beings as the realization of love, we gain a definition which will include all goodness and all freedoms, and which is as far as possible from regarding the spiritual world as a great mechanical system working out inevitably a predetermined end.

We agree, then, with M. Bergson, that the history of the universe is the history of a great adventure. The end is not settled beforehand. God does not will the final state of things from the beginning. He has not put us here that we may carry out a given programme. We are free, and the future depends upon our decisions. We are not caged spirits, beating our wings vainly against the bars of a mechanically arranged system. None the less, our whole life is so ordered that in exercising our freedom there is set before us the hope of winning a final blessedness in which all that is best in us will find full realization. Life is therefore, in the true sense, an adventure, a strife and a pursuing, the following of a light which moves ever before us, but which we may well believe will lead us at last to the home where we would be.

It is in the strength of this faith that all good lives are lived, and all that is truly worthy in human work is accomplished. Yet it cannot be said that the principles which have been set forth above, taken by themselves, provide a satisfactory justification of it. Why should we believe that the great adventure must have a fortunate conclusion? Why should the romance of human history attain to a happy consummation? May it not be that the total effect of freedom may be, in the end, a complete disintegration of organized spiritual life? If it be true that we are moving towards an unknown and unforeseeable future, may it not be that the harmony towards which our best efforts are directed will prove unattainable? May not the wills which choose self-regarding aims prevail over those which seek the common good? Or may it not be that the conditions of our existence, the difficulties we have to encounter, the forces we have to overcome, will turn out to be so hostile and so powerful that the good will be defeated, and the evil finally triumph? It is a very sinister fact that after so many centuries of civilized life, and after so many determined endeavours on the part of all the forces of good to realize the Christian ideal of love and brotherhood, the whole world should be involved in the vastest, bloodiest, and most disastrous war in all history; and that we should see all the most marvellous resources of mechanical science used for destruction. In the face of such a fact as this, our faith in human destiny might well be lost in despair.

Here, again, comes to our aid the supreme principle to which every great fundamental problem leads in the end. Our human wills are all in the last resort included in One Great Enfolding Life, conscious and

superconscious, personal and superpersonal. There must be a unity in which all the diversity of the spiritual universe will be overcome and harmonized. We move out towards the unknowable future, not as isolated centres of indetermination competing or co-operating with one another in a purely capricious and haphazard manner. We are included in a single, all-comprehending Life. It may be that, for Him also, the precise form of the future is, as yet, undetermined, if such a phrase have any meaning as applied to Him. But the fact of His ultimate all-inclusiveness and unity is the ground of our assurance that, whatever be the nature of the goal, it must be good and not evil; it must be a harmony and not a discord. No matter what may happen to us in the course of our history, we believe that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

These considerations bring out in a remarkable way the value of the great religious doctrine of the Unity of God. The essence of that doctrine is that the ultimate truth of things is good not evil, harmony not discord, realization not disappointment, integration not disintegration, love not hatred. When St. John proclaimed that God is Love, he uttered a truth that forms the summing up of all the best hopes that ever found a place in human hearts, and a statement which includes all reasons for confidence in the future that the human mind has ever been able to grasp.

To the religious mind God is, above all, conceived as the One who will bring good out of evil, joy out of sorrow, gain out of loss. He is the One who can and will overcome all that opposes the final blessedness. Within the sphere of His all-comprehending Life there

is room for our freedom, but our freedom will surely be controlled, not with loss of itself but with full realization, by His guiding Love. For Love conquers without destroying. And in these utterances of the religious mind we can discern an apprehension of the truth upon which all coherence in thought and life ultimately depends.

CHAPTER X

FUTURE LIFE

When we have reason to believe in the dominance of purpose in the universe, we are at once confronted with the problem of immortality, or future life. If the course of natural and human history is being directed towards the realization of a supreme end, we are bound to ask, Is that end one in which we are to have a personal share, or do we cease to exist when our short life in this world is finished? Further, is the end one which is to be realized under earthly conditions at some distant date, or is this life only a stage on the way to another? Is the future towards which we are tending, the future which is being created by the freedom of all spiritual beings, a remote, far-off, inaccessible state of things, as distant, perhaps, from our present life as is the inner constitution of the dog-star from this earth of ours, or can we regard it as a harmony in which we can hope to share?

There is certainly something in our spiritual nature which claims for us a permanent part in the order of the universe, and that, not merely as stages in the production of the final result, but as sharers in it. The belief that the "soul" of man outlives his body in some way or other, seems to arise naturally, almost inevitably, out of human experience. The animistic savage believes

in a spirit in everything which strikes him as possessing an individuality of its own. Above all, he believes in the spirits of the departed. This primitive animism is the source whence springs most of the ancient religions. It can be easily traced in the faiths of ancient Egypt, of Greece, and of Rome. It is alive in the great religions of India; and in China, Japan, and Burma it breaks through the superimposed Buddhism. In Egypt, it appeared in the extraordinary elaboration of funeral rites, and in the effort to secure permanence for the body and for the habitation to which the body was consigned. That strange document, the Book of the Dead, shows how intensely real the after-life was to the mind of ancient Egypt. In philosophic Buddhism, the conception of the soul was supplanted by that of a spiritual resultant, the unextinguished desire of a man's life, passing on to another life. Only when all evil craving is overcome does the succession cease.

In some great philosophic and religious faiths the connection between this life and the future is secured by the idea of the transmigration of souls. In Buddhism, which denies the doctrine of the soul, the doctrine of *Karma*, just referred to, takes the place of this idea. But the aim of the wise man, in the Buddhist system, is to bring the process to an end, and attain peace. What exactly this final state, commonly called Nirvana in the writings of the European interpreters of Buddhism, is intended to signify it is difficult to say. Recent interpreters hold that it is not a doctrine of a future life, but rather of a state to be reached in this world by him who has attained perfection.

The case of Buddhism is profoundly interesting. Its essence is a doctrine exceedingly like M. Bergson's. It maintains that there is no Being, only Becoming.

It is a philosophy of change, not unlike that of Heracleitus. The individual has no real, no permanent, existence. He, or it, is but an eddy in the river of life, and, sooner or later, will be dissipated. The only reality is the eternal flux.

A doctrine like this does not yield belief in individual immortality. And it is a very important question for our consideration, whether the conception of reality with which our investigations started involves a similar conclusion. What is meant by the soul? A child-like, uncritical metaphysic, like that of the average man, thinks of it as some unimaginable sprite enthroned in the brain. A more conventional metaphysic calls it an immaterial substance. A modern idealistic believer identifies it with the Ego, and claims for it the permanence which must belong to the presupposed subject of experience.

With this last description we shall not quarrel. But, in view of the doctrine of reality set forth above, this account can hardly be regarded as sufficient. The old scholastic metaphysics divided substances into two sorts, material and immaterial. Material substances are the underlying realities of the material things known through the senses. Over against them stand the immaterial realities called souls. Both kinds of substances are regarded as permanent beings.

Our examination of experience led to a very different doctrine. Material things are not distinct and separate beings. Reality as known in our experience is not a collection of separable things. It is a living, moving *continuum*. What we call material things are elements isolated by abstraction, and they belong to a lower abstract realm, which is only reached by this isolating, arresting, process. Their permanence

and independence of us are due to the fact that they are elements in a great universal experience in which we share. On the other hand, the living, moving *continuum* of a human experience possesses a unity of its own, a unity characterized by that peculiar interpenetration of elements which we saw to be of the essence of conscious experience. This unity is of higher degree than the unity possessed by any abstract material thing. Here is the spiritual being of man. The soul, if the term may be employed, is not a thing which stands distinct and separate while the current of reality sweeps by: it is not a hard core, or dense nucleus, in the centre of a luminous atmosphere: it is the conscious experience itself as a whole, and as possessing a unity which is the very essence of its peculiar nature. The idea of the soul as a substance is, in fact, altogether misleading. The soul, in the only sense in which the word can be properly used, is the living experience in its fulness. It is the living experience of the individual. This experience possesses unity, continuity, and individuality. It is self-conscious and self-directing. This is the Soul, or Self, of man. It is the Personality.

When this position has been gained, it becomes evident that the continuance of the soul's life, if there be such continuance after death, must be, like its life here, in an order of reality higher than that to which material things belong. The imagery by which the thought of Buddhism and of kindred systems represents the relation of the individual life to the universal is wholly misleading. The raindrop merged in the ocean, the eddy forming in the current and then disappearing: these material illustrations provide no parallel with the facts of the life of the soul in its relation to God. They belong to the lower order of things. They are efforts

of the limited abstract intelligence to deal with facts which lie beyond its range.

What we have to consider is, whether there is any characteristic in the nature of the self which would seem to carry with it the promise of a larger life than that which belongs to it in the present state of things? This question directs our attention at once to the conception of *Value*. Value exists only in relation to the life of the self. The whole of human life is regulated in accordance with a scale of values. Material things may possess value, but only because they are involved in certain human needs and interests. Our æsthetic and moral judgments are all relative to certain standards of value. Morality stands at the summit of the whole system. Its fundamental principle is that the human individual is possessed of absolute value. Every man is an end in himself. The soul of man has a worth which sets it above, and apart from, all other finite existences. It is never to be regarded as a means only, always as an end. It is priceless, absolute.

It might seem, however, that this absolute value of the human soul is only relative to human life, that we have no reason to believe that the soul could be regarded in this way by a Being dwelling in a higher order of reality. Here, once again, we shall find help by considering the soul of man in relation to things lower in the scale of reality. We saw that the organization of matter reaches its highest point when matter is taken up into organic life—when, that is, the material order of things is brought into closest relation with conscious experience. On the ground of this analogy we concluded that personality, which is the characteristic form of our experience, and which we have reason to believe belongs also to God, must reach its highest

perfection in Him. For this reason we believe that all essential forms of personal quality, wisdom, goodness, love, truth, æsthetic faculty, may not only be predicated of Him, but must reach their utmost perfection in Him. That is, since God possesses Personality, all our standards of ultimate value exist for Him. Now, all these standards depend in the last resort on the value which resides in the personality itself. Here is to be found the very meaning of value as such. We must hold, then, that every person, every self-conscious, self-directing experience, is possessed of intrinsic value for God.

This is a conclusion to which the whole history of the universe, so far as we have been able to grasp it, points most definitely. We trace, in our retrospective sciences, the course of evolution, physical and organic. We watch the formation of worlds, the processes by which our globe became habitable, the development of living forms. We see all these forms of life leading to the manifestation of conscious experience. Living forms develop along a multitude of separate lines. Most of these lines go a certain way and then cease. Those that have survived may be divided into three great classes—the vegetable, the animal, the human. The first subserves all animal creation as the essential and fundamental food-supply; the second has produced mental life in the form of instinct and, having attained wonderful and infinitely varied results, has reached a condition in which no further great advance seems possible; the third is characterized by the appearance of intellectual and moral life. So far as this earth is concerned, man is clearly the summit of creation. His intellect gives him power over natural forces and makes him dominant in the animal world.

His personality, with its appreciation of moral and æsthetic values, gives him capacity for a truly social life and for all that we sum up under the term Civilization.

The history of the natural world, then, yields a view of a great order in creation, an order which subserves the production of human life. If, then, there be any directing will in the universe, any tendency in things, any appreciation of values in relation to the creative movement, we must discern in man the clearest indication of the meaning of the whole. The cosmic order stamps the human type with the hall-mark of supreme value.

But, it may seem, this leads only to an appreciation of the type; immortality, if there be such a thing, must be for the individual. The objection serves to bring out the full value of the argument. Of humanity, it must be said, that the type has no worth apart from the individual. The human individual is an end in himself. In humanity, individuality reaches its consummation. The individuality of lower things is derivative, abstract. The individuality of man is concrete and essential. Man's value is intrinsic. It belongs to him as the possessor of a moral nature.

Believing then, as we do, that God is Himself possessed of moral Personality, and that therefore the human individual is, for Him, a creature whose value resides in itself, a being whom He regards as, for its own sake, worth making and saving, we must also believe that He has not destined this creature to a merely momentary existence. Man's innate sense of absolute value is witness of his value to God and the one sure proof of future life. And the proof which thus comes to light is immensely strengthened by the discovery that the vast agelong processes of creation have, after

infinite variations and the production of myriad types, brought about a race of beings possessed of moral personality, able to think and to appreciate ethical and æsthetic values, capable of love and social relationship, fitted with faculties which can find no perfect realization in a brief earthly existence.

The argument which, under the influence of modern philosophic thought, assumes this form is, in essence, precisely that which is contained in the reply of Christ to the Sadducees. From the great words which were the charter of the Jewish Theocracy, He derived the doctrine of the future life. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." If it be true that God cares so much for men, then it is also true that He designs for them a larger life than is possible in a few short years on earth. He cannot let them perish. If He is their God and they are His people, the Almighty must have for them a better destiny.

An even fuller meaning is found in this teaching when the conception of Love as the highest description of the nature of God is considered. Love cannot let its children perish if it possess the power to save them. It must seek for them the fulness of life and the deepest joy. A moral universe in which God, possessed of moral Personality, interacts with the whole multitude of finite persons, also moral in their nature, is essentially a social universe, and therefore a universe which must find its highest ideal in the realization of love. In such a universe, the use of countless generations of moral beings as mere stepping-stones—means, that is, for the attainment of an end in which they themselves have no personal share—is an impossibility. The end of love is

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the realization of the full nature and capacities of each and of all, in relation to one another. The whole cannot be perfected if any one is omitted. The good of each is the good of all, and the good of all is the good of each. There is a perfect unification of interests. If Love be the highest thing in the universe, its aim must be this. It can be nothing less. And such an end can never be realized under earthly conditions. It demands a higher life.

And here comes in the conception of Degrees of Reality. When we apply the principle of Love to human life in its present circumstances, we find ourselves straining against the bars of our prison. Our conscious experience is the full concrete reality in relation to the abstract material world which is below it in the order of being. But, in relation to God, and to the life of all conscious moral beings in God, our experience finds itself poor and ineffectual. It feels its imperfection. Its limitations, which are the cause of all our troubles when we try to grapple with ultimate problems, give us a sense of impotence. We are confronted with mystery and apparent contradiction. But this very fact, when we view it aright, is a proof of two things. First, that there is a higher order of being than any that we can attain to here and now. And, secondly, that we are not wholly aliens in relation to that higher life. The principle of love which enables us to pass, in some sense, the barrier between soul and soul ; which unites and identifies things and values which, for our ordinary reason, stand apart unreconciled ; which can overcome the opposition between wills without destroying them, but rather realizing them ; which, to the simple heart, makes God the greatest and nearest of all realities, and the direct

object of the highest affection—this principle is a revelation that we have already some share in the higher order of being and are capable of enjoying something of its essential life.

Love is therefore a pledge and a prophecy. It is an assurance that we are destined to something better than this life. It is a prophecy that, in a higher state of being, we shall attain a realization impossible here.

St. Paul, in dealing with the doctrine of the Resurrection, foreshadows a conception of the future life which is essentially that to which we have now attained. For him, as for Christian thought generally, no mere belief in the immortality of the soul suffices. It is characteristic of all doctrines of a disembodied immortality that they regard the future life as a pale copy of this life, a world of shades. It is through the relation of the bodily organism to its material environment that the conscious subject gains the fulness of earthly experience. It is through the mediation of the same organism that human will executes its determinations and shapes the course of life. Cut off from this mechanism of bodily existence and the sensible matter of experience which it yields, the conscious experience must, seemingly, become a dream-life of memories and reflections. If it can continue to exist, it must, apparently, be devoid of all the rich content which gives fulness and continual variety to our present experience.

The conceptions of the ancient world and the ideas of pagan peoples at the present day bear, almost all, the impress of this conclusion. When the Chinese make paper toys in the likeness of the various things used by the dead man during his life on earth, and burn them at his funeral, that their ghosts may serve his purposes in the world to which he has departed, it is

clear that they think of the soul as a shade dwelling in a world of shadows.

In striking contrast with all such conceptions is the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. It teaches that the future life is no mere shadow-land, but a state of being fuller, richer, better in every respect, than this life. It is therefore conceived as an embodied, not a disembodied, life. But this does not mean, St. Paul teaches, the reanimation of our earthly organisms. "There is a natural body," he writes, "and there is also a spiritual body." "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."*

Here the idea is that at some future moment a great change shall pass upon us. The conditions of our life shall be transformed from those of an earthly existence which is essentially fugitive and subject to decay, to those of a spiritual existence, as he terms it, which shall have a higher nature and be essentially enduring. St. Paul here, with splendid daring, gives to the conception of a spiritual state a new connotation. He conceives a spiritual body as carrying with it a fuller, richer, more abundant life.

That this is his intention is clearly shown by the remarkable passage in which he recurs to this conception and, indeed, carries it a step further.† Here

* 1 Cor. xv. 44 *ff.* † See 2 Cor. v. 1 *ff.*

the term "spiritual" is not used, but the nature of the future state of things in its relation to the present is more clearly defined. The material body is called "the earthly house of our tabernacle." If it "be dissolved," we have "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Then, in the effort after full expression, another metaphor is introduced. The new life is conceived as a vesture in which we are to be clothed. "We," writes the Apostle, "that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." That is, the imperfections which belong to our life in this world are not to be remedied by getting rid of an embodied life, but by entering into a life of higher and better embodiment. Our sorrows are to be cured, not by passing into a life of shadows, not by being "unclothed"—by losing, that is, the wealth of our mediated experiences—but by being "clothed upon," by undergoing a change which shall transform all the conditions of our existence by merging them in the conditions of a higher life.

The body is rightly chosen as representing the nature of the life to which it belongs. Here we gain all our experiences by means of a material body set in a material environment. The body stands for the general character of the life which we live. Upon this lower life, St. Paul teaches, there shall supervene a higher order of things which shall effect a great transformation. "Mortality shall be swallowed up of life." Or, strictly, "the mortal thing shall be swallowed up of life." It would be hard to find language more justly expressive of the idea of a higher order of reality taking up a lower into itself, assimilating and

transmuting it. Here we have the essential conception of St. Paul's teaching about the nature of the future life. It is a life at a higher level of reality. And, as the conscious life which we enjoy in our present existence, while it mediates its experiences by means of the lower material order of things, yet takes that order up into itself, so shall the conscious experience of the future life take up into itself our present life with all its conditions. And as the conscious experience which we now have is far fuller and richer than the material order, so shall the conscious experience of the future be far fuller and richer than that which we possess here.

This is the only doctrine of immortality which can satisfy the demands of a thoughtful modern mind. An immortality of ghostly shadow-life, if such a conception has any real meaning, would be a misery too awful to contemplate. So also would be an endless duration of such life as we have in this world. The crude conception of the Resurrection, as the restoration and reanimation of our earthly bodies, common as it is in the mind of unreflecting piety, is impossible physically, and is also incapable of being reconciled with the idea of immortality. It is not at all the doctrine of St. Paul. He saw as clearly as any modern mind that only in a life of higher order than we experience here could immortality be a blessing.

CHAPTER XI

MYSTICISM

"WHETHER in the Vedas, in the Platonists, or in the Hegelians," writes John Stuart Mill, "mysticism is neither more nor less than ascribing objective existence to the subjective creations of our own faculties, to ideas or feelings of the mind; and believing that by watching and contemplating these ideas of its own making, it can read in them what takes place in the world without."* The consideration which leads Mill to this statement is his observation of the common human tendency to suppose "that wherever there is a name there must be a distinguishable separate entity corresponding to the name." Thus arises the personification of abstractions. Thus, also, it came to pass that "concrete general terms were supposed to be, not names of indefinite numbers of individual substances, but names of a peculiar kind of entities termed 'universal substances.'"

"It may be imagined," says Mill, "what havoc metaphysicians trained in these habits made with philosophy when they came to the largest generalizations of all. *Substantiæ secundæ* of any kind were bad enough, but such *substantiæ secundæ* as τό ὄν, for example, and τό ἕν, standing for peculiar entities supposed to be inherent in all things which *exist*, or

* J. S. Mill, *Logic*, bk. v., chap. iii., § 4.

in all which are said to be *one*, were enough to put an end to all intelligible discussion." "This misapprehension of the import of general language," he concludes, "constitutes Mysticism, a word so much oftener written and spoken than understood."*

These last words certainly restrict the scope of the term "mysticism" too much. Its use is not confined to a way of regarding objects which have the form of general ideas, such as "the All," or "the One," or "Pure Being." It is also employed to describe a peculiar attitude of the mind towards certain feelings or impressions. It is even applied to a way of regarding visions or appearances which are sometimes stated to have entered into religious experience. Mill, indeed, takes account of this in the wider definition which was first quoted.

It is, however, the chief defect of Mill's definition that he is not content to state the facts, but also adds a theory to explain them. According to him, mysticism, in every shape and form, is a delusion. It is the ascribing of objective existence to the subjective creations of our own faculties. To start with a definition of this kind is surely to render an impartial examination impossible. Mill's account must therefore be held to be a "question-begging" theory of the most obvious kind.

It is not easy to define mysticism. The word is used vaguely and variously. Sometimes it refers simply to the mysterious, the hidden, or half-revealed. Sometimes it connotes the symbolic representation of things or of doctrines which are regarded as too high, in their full reality, for human knowledge But neither of these uses corresponds to the characteristic

* *Loc. cit.*

element in the experiences of the long succession of the great mystics. If the history of these great thinkers, or dreamers, is to be taken as our guide, we must define mysticism as the effort to know spiritual realities by immediate experience.

Whether or not this effort has been successful is the whole question at issue; and it cannot be settled by a question-begging definition such as Mill's, nor, on the other hand, by an appeal, however moving, to the saintliness and spiritual insight of the men and women who tell us they have attained the beatific vision. To the man who makes this latter claim, no reply can indeed be made. His assertion of immediate knowledge is essentially unanswerable. But it is always possible to hold, with Mill, that he is mistaking for objective fact the subjective creation of his own faculties. If there is nothing to be said but that he has a strong conviction which yields him great assurance and peace, it is easy to point out, with Bishop Butler, that testimony is no proof of enthusiastic opinion, but only of facts. If he asserts that, for him, it is fact, the answer is easy that, for others, it is but opinion.

Dean Inge sums up his investigations in the history of mysticism in these remarkable words: "The principle, 'Cuique in sua arte credendum est,' applies to those who have been eminent for personal holiness as much as to the leaders in any other branch of excellence. Even in dealing with arts which are akin to each other, we do not invite poets to judge of music, or sculptors of architecture. We need not, then, be disturbed if we occasionally find men illustrious in other fields who are as insensible to religion as to poetry. Our reverence for the character and genius

of Charles Darwin need not induce us to lay aside either our Shakespeare or our New Testament. The men to whom we naturally turn as our best authorities in spiritual matters are those who seem to have been endowed with an 'anima naturaliter Christiana,' and who have devoted their whole lives to the service of God and the imitation of Christ. Now, it will be found that these men of acknowledged and pre-eminent saintliness agree very closely in what they tell us about God. They tell us that they have arrived gradually at an unshakable conviction, not based on inference but on immediate experience, that God is a Spirit with whom the human spirit can hold intercourse; that in Him meet all that they can imagine of goodness, truth, and beauty; that they can see His footprints everywhere in Nature, and feel His presence within them as the very life of their life, so that in proportion as they come to themselves they come to Him."*

In this passage Dean Inge seems to claim for mysticism the whole volume of Christian experience. To do so, is to identify mysticism and religion. It may be conceded that in our day, and especially amongst educated people, this identification is practically correct. It was not so at all times and in all places. The average Christian of the Middle Ages did not seek God in his "heart." God was, for him, a Supreme Sovereign, enthroned above the sky, imagined in human form, issuing commands, ruling armies, summoning men to judgment, rewarding and punishing as a human autocrat would. This view of God was attained by a process of simple education, and believed in as we now believe in the facts of present-

* Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, lecture viii., p. 325.

day history; because all ordinary sources of information, presumably trustworthy, conveyed it. It derived its power, no doubt, from the fact that, unconsciously, it made a strong appeal to conscience. But it would be an abuse of language to describe a religion of this sort as mystical.

Nor, again, could the type of Christianity which was characteristic of the eighteenth century be regarded as mystical. This term could not be applied to a religion which infers the existence of God from particular instances of design in Nature, and so reasons out for itself a belief in Him as a great engineer or artificer, related to the world as the mechanic is related to the machine he constructs, and which makes this thought the corner-stone of all its reflection upon religion and life. The mind of thinkers like Paley and Butler, with its conception of God as transcendent in relation to the world, to the total exclusion of every doctrine of Immanence, is definitely antagonistic to mysticism. Yet it is noteworthy that Butler himself reaches his greatest elevation as a Christian thinker when, in his two sermons on the Love of God, he sets forth the doctrine that an Infinite Being may Himself be "an adequate supply to all the faculties of our souls; a subject to our understanding, and an object to our affections." But this supreme bliss is, he seems to hold, altogether for the future life. "As our capacities of perception improve, we shall have, perhaps by some faculty entirely new, a perception of God's presence with us, in a nearer and stricter way, since it is certain He is more intimately present with us than anything else can be. Proof of the existence and presence of any being is quite different from the immediate perception, the consciousness of it. What, then, will be

the joy of heart which His presence and 'the light of His countenance,' who is the Life of the Universe, will inspire good men with, when they shall have a sensation that He is the sustainer of their being, that they exist in Him; when they shall feel His influence to cheer, and enliven, and support their frame, in a manner of which we have now no conception? He will be, in a literal sense, 'their strength and their portion for ever.'"*

Butler in this passage—a passage which is all the more impressive because of its wonderful modesty and restraint—draws very near to the mystic's paradise, but he does not enter in. He thinks it too good and great a thing for the present imperfect state of things. "The immediate perception, the consciousness" of God's presence, which the mystic believes he enjoys, is, for Butler, the highest bliss of the future life.

It is impossible, therefore, to claim for mysticism the unanimous testimony of all saintly souls. Many of the best and purest in the long roll of Christian holiness would be found to regard the mystic's experiences as either too high for their attainment or as possibly due in great part to overstrained devotion or "enthusiasm."

Yet it is very interesting to observe that the eighteenth century, which, on its higher intellectual levels, was so inimical to mysticism, saw an immense popular revival of religion in which personal experience of spiritual reality was the predominant note. This movement began, indeed, in the seventeenth century with George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends. His doctrine was essentially mystical. It may perhaps be described as a mysticism so complete that it eschewed

* Butler, second sermon on *The Love of God*.

everything else. For it, the "inward light" constituted the whole of religion. All external forms were discarded. Like the ancient and mediæval mystics, the Quakers practised a systematic self-emptying that they might the more readily receive the Divine inspiration.

It was the very purity and completeness of Quaker mysticism which restricted the influence of the movement. In eschewing external and institutional forms, the Society of Friends lost the means of grasping humanity in a large way. The "inward light" in its naked purity is not for the multitude. It is the possession of select souls only. But the principle had been introduced. Religion as an inner personal relation of the soul to God had assumed a form which corresponded with the mind of the modern world. The Quaker spark smouldered awhile, and then, in the eighteenth century, burst into flame in the great Wesleyan revival.

From that time onwards the real life of religion has been essentially mystical, a matter of spiritual experience. It is not going too far to say that, for us now, the institutional forms and creeds which we hold as amongst our most precious heirlooms, could not last a day were it not that they form a shrine within which multitudes of human souls find an experience which is for them a revelation of Divine love, a veritable vision of God. This is the true proof of religion for modern minds. The age and venerable dignity of the Church; the authority of the great Christian literature; the splendour of the monuments which adorn Christendom, and which speak of the Faith which has survived centuries of barbarism, renaissance, and revolution; the evidential arguments which convinced so many able

minds a hundred years ago—all these would go for nothing apart from this present experience of spiritual blessing.

Dean Inge, in his examination of the older mysticism, points out that there is a practical agreement amongst the great authorities as to the way by which the Divine vision is to be attained. Three stages are indicated. The first is marked by self-discipline and purgation : the soul must overcome the feelings and desires which belong to the life of the body and the senses. In some cases this stage is marked by extreme asceticism. Secondly, there is the stage of illumination, in which all the faculties are concentrated upon God. Thirdly, there is the rarely attained stage of contemplation, or unity, in which man comes face to face with God.

It is important to observe that these three stages correspond exactly with the elements in the experience of conversion through which multitudes of simple men and women have passed in recent times under the influence of the modern Evangelical movement. First, there is conviction of sin—the discovery of the sinful condition of the soul in its natural state. Secondly, there is the turning away from sin and the turning to Christ—the act of faith by which the soul lays hold upon God. Thirdly, there is the peace which comes from the realization of the Divine Love. In many cases this experience is followed by a real and very definite change of life.

Speak to anyone who is fresh from this experience, and it will be found that the conviction that a genuine contact of the soul with God has taken place is as vivid as in any of the great mystics. Every evangelistic meeting, every Church mission, will yield instances in

which, so far as testimony can prove such a thing, human souls have met with God and found peace.

But this experience does not stop here. Something of the same nature enters continually into sincere prayer. What is termed "conversion" is not by any means a unique experience. A conversion is only a great and signal repentance. When the meeting of a soul with God marks the end of a period of spiritual carelessness and the beginning of a period of spiritual earnestness, it is called a conversion. When it occurs in the regular course of a religious life, it is a repentance, or simply a prayer. The elements are always in essence the same: the turning away from the lower, sinful, or earthly things; the turning to God, realizing His presence, and trusting in His power and love; the enjoyment, when faith is keen, of a peculiar bliss involved in the very fact of His presence.

There can be no doubt at all that in such experiences a believing soul has a sense of a great Presence which is *sui generis*. That Presence is felt; and the feeling is quite different from the feeling of the presence of a human friend, no matter how intimate. In the latter case there is, as a rule, some use of the bodily senses—the eye, the ear, or the hand provides the connecting link. Or, if it be true, as now seems probable, that there is a telepathic feeling which makes us aware of a friend's presence, this awareness is quite unlike the religious sense of the Divine presence. Towards God the soul feels itself absolutely open. He is not only immediately and most intimately related, but is felt to penetrate and permeate the whole being. He knows us better than we know ourselves. When, in sincerest self-scrutiny in the presence of God, a soul endeavours to unravel the motives which have led to a certain

course of conduct, and finds itself puzzled, the invariable resource is the cry: "I know not; but, O God, Thou knowest."

As we saw above, the religious consciousness thinks of God as knowing us "from within."* And when, in the deep abyss of personal life, a soul strives with itself for some real knowledge of itself, and finds no certain answer to its questionings, the one thought which gives help is this: "There is One who knows me through and through; to Him I appeal." And the prayer which is offered is always in effect that of the Psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The implication underlying all these great human experiences is that there is a spiritual life, larger, deeper, truer than our own, which envelops us and penetrates us, which is closer to our whole self than we are ourselves to much that is part of ourselves—a life in which "we live and move and have our being."

Tennyson's *Higher Pantheism* expresses the feeling which lies behind every prayer, and the conviction that gives reality to all religious self-examination:

> "Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

But it is not with every spirit that the spirit of man can meet in the manner we have endeavoured to describe, but only with that One Supreme All-embracing Spirit whom we call God. Nor can His nearness be compared to the nearness of breathing and of hands and feet, for He is closer to us than is ourself of yesterday.

* See above, p. 107.

The experience which we have just considered enters more or less distinctly into every real prayer. It is, indeed, the very essence of prayer. It appears, therefore, that mysticism, or rather the experience which mysticism claims as its own peculiar possession, is, in truth, the central fact of all personal religion. Are mysticism and personal religion, then, identical? In essence it would appear that they are. The only real distinction would seem to be this—that mysticism consciously seeks God within; it sets before itself the task of coming face to face with God through the discipline and scrutiny of the inner life of feeling and thought. The mediæval Christian looked up to the sky and directed his prayers thither. The child to-day does the same.

The mind accustomed to think of God in a cosmic way, as Creator and Ruler of the Universe, may also direct his prayers to some far-distant sphere where a Supreme Being sits enthroned. But these are merely habits of thought which serve as veils to hide the reality. That reality is God and man meeting in the realm of the Spirit. And this truth, which in former times was usually concealed, has now become the common property of all devout souls. The things which were hidden from the wise and prudent are now revealed unto babes.

It is profoundly interesting to consider that the very real difficulties which were erected for religion by the science of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, difficulties which overthrew the faith of many sincere minds, have had the effect of bringing out the inner meaning and truth of religious experience. Science, far from destroying religion, has only torn away the veil of material imagery which hid the reality.

And let it also be observed that, while this work of rending the veil was going on, there was taking place a great religious revival which was at heart the revelation of the truth that mystical experience is not for the exalted saint or the pious recluse only, but for every soul that will seek God in sincerity.

The essential fact of religious experience is, then, to be found in the inner world of the spirit, and not in the outer world of the material order of things. But what ground have we for supposing that this inner experience is anything but, as Mill says, a subjective creation to which we ascribe objective existence? This is a profoundly important question. The sceptic will inevitably say, This sense of the Divine presence, this coming face to face with God, of which the mystic is convinced, belongs to a realm of experience which is not subject to exact scientific examination. It is a realm in which imagination is very active. Further, it will be added, it is quite easy to trace the genesis of this feeling of a great Presence within. In earlier and simpler times, when people believed in God as a great Sovereign in the skies, they addressed their prayers to Him as to any other great external authority, believing that with His great powers He could hear and answer, although so distant. But with waiting and brooding came a further degree of introspection. Devout persons began to reflect on their own inner states of mind, to express their prayers in thought rather than to speak them with their lips, and to attend more to inward conditions, such as sincerity or feelings of gladness or sadness, and to make these conditions signs of success or failure. The very fact of prayer in thought, instead of in speech, would generate the feeling of someone listening within rather than without. The impressions

of gladness or sadness would naturally be regarded as signs of a presence in which the prayer was acceptable or the reverse. Hence would arise easily and inevitably the whole range of mystical emotions and convictions. When after the long strain of devotion, perhaps with much preliminary fasting and mortification, the pious soul would undergo deep depression followed by a reaction, the sudden sense of peace would be held to be a Divine manifestation. Very similar, on this theory, would be the explanation of the peace of conversion. Strong emotions of a penitential character—fear, remorse, self-abasement — followed by the sudden assurance that forgiveness has been granted, and crowned with reflection upon the pardoning love of God as revealed in the sufferings of Christ, naturally lead to a strong reaction in which a great emotion of joy in the realization of peace with God predominates. Out of such experiences it is only to be expected that there will emerge cases in which a very definite change of life will be made. A sincere believer, convinced that he has come under the influence of a higher power, will often be carried by that conviction through temptations which would formerly have overcome him, and so be able to form new habits, thus entering on a new life. When to this is added the evidence, derived from such investigations as those contained in James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, which shows that the effect of the superficial experience of which the man is conscious may be reinforced by great subconscious changes of mental or moral balance, it will appear that a strong case can be made out in favour of a purely psychological explanation. With such cold logic do some scientific minds apply Mill's principle to the facts of religious experience.

These arguments will not move greatly the believing soul fresh from the beatific vision, for the vision carries its credentials with it. Realization of the Divine presence seems to bear always the marks of a personal relationship between the soul and God. And just as the love of one human soul for another can be tested and proved by no weighing of measurable quantities, by no scientific methods, but by experience only, so must it be with the love of God. The proof of such things must be found in the enjoyment of them, and their verification in the whole course of the life.

Yet, for thoughtful minds which lie open to all the suggestions of reason, it is important to consider the grave question which has thus been raised. Can it be that the whole mystical experience of mankind is a great illusion? Can it be true that the God whom we meet in the silent shrine of our hearts is but a creature of our dreams?

In order to be in a position to deal fairly with this question, we have to consider what is meant by the distinction between "inner" and "outer" in mystical experience. Mysticism, we have seen, is the finding of God within. Its cardinal doctrine is the "inward light." It appeals to the saying in the Gospel, "The kingdom of God is within you." In the hidden sanctuary of the heart God and man meet face to face.

This distinction has had an enormous influence on the nature of the experiences which mystics have sought and attained. It was the prevailing belief amongst them that, in order to enjoy union with the Divine, everything belonging to the life of sense and to our material body and environment must be rigorously excluded. These were supposed to impair the spiritual faculties and unfit man for the presence of

God. Hence mysticism generally tended towards asceticism. Hence, also, the marking out of the "negative way" which the mystic must follow in order to gain his end. From Plotinus and the Pseudo-Dionysius, through the early and Middle Ages, down to modern times, the *via negativa* is set forth by leading authorities as the true path to the Divine presence. Here the mysticism of the West shows a very close affinity with that of the East. In both, a man is exhorted to empty himself of all that is characteristic of his own personal life in order that he may enter into union with the ultimate Reality. Abstracting from all that belongs to his individuality—from sense, desire, thought—he is finally to attain to a condition of blank indefiniteness. In that state he is supposed to be fitted to enter into union with the Infinite.*

The vice of all this is the exact counterpart of that error in speculative philosophy which leads men to search for truth in abstractions. Pure being and abstract unity are the thinnest and poorest of all unrealities. Even so, a mind emptied of all definite content, in a state of blank indefiniteness, is, in truth, as far as possible from the Divine fulness. That way madness lies. It is no wonder at all that the records of the mystics yield so poor a result in the way of thought for the enrichment of human life. It is not surprising that the millions of contemplative religious who, in monastic cells and in caves and deserts, have devoted themselves to the attainment of union with God have bequeathed so little to mankind. Nor need we wonder at the futile and fantastic visions which so many of them experienced.

The truth is that the highest Reality must be the

* See Inge, *op. cit.*, on the Negative Way.

fullest and richest of all, not the emptiest. God is the most concrete of all Beings, not the most abstract. He is the Infinite, not the indefinite. The fuller our life is of all that constitutes true human experience and development, the nearer we approach to Him. The true greatness of our human life consists just in this, that our conscious personal experience takes up into itself whole worlds of lesser realities and subjects them to spiritual purposes and to the freedom of spiritual existence.

We must return to the distinction of "inner" and "outer" in our experience. The basis of this distinction is simply the intuition of space. We call that "outer" which is in space, and that "inner" which is in time only. The former is material, the latter we think of as spiritual. Now, we saw, in our investigation of the nature of our conscious experience, that the spatial world is an element abstracted from the whole. Taken by itself, it is a reality lower in the scale than our experience in its full concreteness. The distinction of "inner" and "outer" ought, then, to mean the distinction between the full concrete reality of experience and the lower reality of the material world. But it need not do so: for it is possible to abstract from the fulness of conscious experience without entering the world of space. It is possible, like some of the mystics, to abstract from sense, from desire, from thought, and approach very closely to a blank indefiniteness. It is not easy, because it is a path we are not accustomed to follow by voluntary effort. We do it without effort sometimes, when we let our faculties become relaxed. But the result of the process, as with other abstractions, is that we grasp realities of lower degree. There is not, in this way, any approach to higher things.

On the other hand, we can become aware of the flowing of the full stream of our conscious active life as a given reality. As we have already seen, we cannot grasp it in its fulness ; we can only be aware that it exists. For us it is the whole of life in contrast with which each isolated element upon which we direct attention stands out defined. Its reality is the most certain fact within our knowledge, for this reality is the first necessary condition of the possibility of any knowledge or any activity. Our awareness of it has been rightly called "intuition" by M. Bergson. But this stream of living experience which forms the whole of each personal life is itself but a part of a larger universe. Of what nature is that universe ?

When we consider any material thing, we find ourselves inevitably compelled to regard it as a part of a great material universe. As a thing in space, it occupies a position which defines it in relation to every other position in space. Given even one spatial figure, and a whole spatial universe is posited. When, in ordinary commonplace speech, we speak of the universe, we usually mean this spatial material world which is a necessary complement of every spatial or material apprehension. But this universe of material things does not contain the conscious experience of any spiritual being. It cannot, because the spatial material world of which any such being is aware is an abstraction, in relation to the fulness of his experience. It is a reality of lower degree. The conscious personal life, being the higher reality, cannot take its place as an element in a universe of lower reality.

Of what nature, then, is the universe in which the personal life of each individual human being takes its place ? There must be some all-including Totality in

which every finite spiritual experience lives and moves and has its being. In this Universe all finite spirits have their home and bond of union. As we have already seen, this final unification must take place in a Life which must be the Highest Reality and the most concrete of all. It is a Life which must be in the highest degree personal, but which must at the same time transcend personality. It is not a universe in the sense in which the world of things in space is a universe, but in the sense of comprehending all reality within itself, and in a way which must transcend all our understanding of comprehension.

This is a result which we have already obtained. Here we are specially concerned with it in view of those experiences which are commonly called mystical. If these experiences are not wholly illusive, their meaning is that we have the power to become aware of the fact that our whole conscious life is enveloped and permeated by a greater Life, that we can feel the presence of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. It may be that the word "feeling" is not the best to employ in this connection. It may be that the relation between our finite lives and the All-inclusive Life is such that no one of the terms expressive of the modes in which we apprehend the various elements of our experience is appropriate. It would seem probable that the word "intuition," by which we express the fact of our awareness of the stream of our conscious life, is the best for our purpose.

The question we have then to consider is this: Does the intuition of our own conscious existence involve also the intuition of a spiritual universe enveloping us? In other words, do we, in grasping the fact of our own existence, grasp also the fact of something

more than ourselves? It seems clear, when the question is put in this way, that the answer must be affirmative. Whatever the mind grasps, whether in intuition or in thought, must be in relation to some other. Every mental act of grasping involves a universe. If anything at all exists, there must be a whole to contain it.

Our wider experience confirms this conclusion. We know there is a vast multitude of distinct personal lives. Each of them is partial, incomplete, and with a character of its own. They enter into relation with one another. They share a common life. On the material side, this common life takes its place in the great material universe. On the spiritual side there must also be a universe whose life they share. The very fact of the multiplicity of distinct personal experiences and points of view implies an All-inclusive Whole, a universe embracing them all. That this Whole must be personal and something more we have already seen reason to believe.

This is, in essence, the famous *à priori* proof of the being of God which is usually connected with the name of Anselm of Canterbury. He argues from the idea of God as the greatest and best to His real existence. The idea of that which is best must include existence, therefore God exists. As it stands, this argument certainly lies open to Mill's objection that it ascribes objective existence to the subjective creations of our own faculties. As Kant contends, the idea of a hundred sovereigns is very different from the reality. But, as Hegel urges against Kant, the idea of God is very different from the idea of any finite thing. "Certainly it would be strange," says Hegel, "if the notion, the very inmost of mind, if even the ego, or,

above all, the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to include so poor a category as being, the very poorest and most abstract of all."*

The abstract language in which Hegel expresses this and other statements on the subject disguises his real meaning. To gain the full force of his contention we must consider the problem in the concrete. The mind of man, to take the lower instance he gives, certainly includes in its idea of itself the fact of its existence. The fact of self-consciousness carries with it the existence of the self. There could be no self-consciousness if there were not a self. Further, the fact that any thought at all is possible carries with it the existence of the self. "I think, therefore I am." But we can go further. The fact of thought carries with it also the existence of a concrete totality embracing both thoughts and things. And, as things are creatures of thought, this concrete whole must be not only spiritual in its nature, but also the highest and best of all spiritual realities, the All-inclusive Reality.

As a piece of school logic, Anselm's proof has all the defects Kant and others have found in it. But as an interpretation of experience, as a demonstration of what is ultimately involved in the spiritual nature of man, it is perfectly sound: and the experience of the mystic is but the practical realization of it. The philosopher, reasoning back from the nature of human experience, and seeking the conditions on which it is possible, discovers, as the ultimate presupposition of the whole, a Universal Spiritual Life in which all finite experiences have their source and dwelling-place, and in which they must find their consummation. The religious

* *Logic*, Wallace's translation, § 51. Erigena seems to have anticipated Hegel here.

mind, feeling intensely the incompleteness of a merely earthly life, conscious of moral and spiritual imperfections, conscious also of an inner need which can be filled by no finite satisfaction, finds itself at length in the presence of the Infinite Spirit, and is amazed at the discovery that the Greatest and Best is also the closest and the most certain of all realities. "O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts can have no rest until they find their rest in Thee."

Ancient and mediæval mystics were much concerned with the task of tracing out the road which the soul must travel in order to make this great discovery. We have seen that there is a great volume of testimony in favour of the *via negativa*. Negation of self, with all its preoccupations of sense, desire, and even thought, was regarded as the only sure way to the goal. This way, as we saw, corresponds very closely with the method of abstraction in philosophy. It must, therefore, be mistaken. Yet it cannot be wholly erroneous. How far it is mistaken, and how far it is right, is a question of much importance. There is certainly a true and necessary sense in which the denial of self is the only way to high attainment. To adopt a phraseology much in vogue with some modern writers, we must deny the lower self in order that we may gain the higher self. Mastery over fleshly appetites and unruly passions, over pleasure-seeking and wayward impulses, is an essential condition of moral and spiritual achievement. Again, there is certainly, from the spiritual point of view, a scale of values amongst the objects of desire. A self-controlled man is not always a spiritual man. The mastery of appetite and unruly passion may be due to a cool calculation of means to certain very earthly ends. The

crafty man of the world may be perfectly self-controlled as regards all the wilder human impulses, because he is in pursuit of wealth or power. In relation to the things of the spirit, such aims are perhaps even more destructive than the animal appetites.

It is clear, therefore, that the denial of the lower desires and interests is a necessary condition of spiritual attainment. So far the *via negativa* must be followed. But this does not involve the emptying of the self. Quite the contrary. It is of the nature of the lower desires that they hinder the soul's full and true development. If allowed to dominate the life, they produce a one-sided, and therefore imperfect, personality ; the man does not attain to the best of which he is capable. In a full-orbed personality, every essential human element should be developed to its own proper degree and in relation to every other. The life of sense, for example, which is mediated through the relation of the body to its material environment, is an essential part of human experience, and must have its due share in the human life ; but it ought not to become dominant. Desires and interests of all normal kinds give richness and fulness to life, and are to be satisfied in their due proportion, and in accordance with the capacities and opportunities of the individual ; but none of them should be allowed to become so absorbing as to crush out other necessary elements. In a perfect human life, sense, appetite, desire, intellect, æsthetic faculty, affection, social capacity, must all have due share and proper proportion. And it would seem contrary to all that we can discern of the harmony of things that any other human type, any abnormal human development, should be better fitted for intercourse with God than that which is indicated by all our

experience as most perfectly fulfilling the Divine intention for man. It is not to be supposed that God seeks a stunted, or one-sided, humanity as the object of His special favour. The negative way is therefore only to be followed in so far as may be necessary to subdue the unruly elements in our nature, so that all may be brought into subordination to those principles which should regulate the whole.

In our discussion of the problem of Freedom, we were led to see that the will in operation is the movement of the whole personality. For this reason will is free. This truth has a very important bearing on the question before us. It will help us to see that the finding of God in experience is not a revelation granted to a soul which has emptied itself of all its human possessions. It will also show that this finding of God is not the work of any special faculty. Some mystics have held a doctrine of what they termed a "Divine spark" in the soul of man, an organ by which man enters into the life of God. It is conceived as in some way a connecting link between the Divine and the human. Psychologically, a doctrine of this kind leads to great difficulties. Also, the supposition of a special faculty is wholly unnecessary. Man is nearest to God when he is most fully in possession of himself. Then it is that he confronts most distinctly the spiritual environment in which he lives. The abstract or imperfect life is apart from God. The concrete life is close to God. In other words, man is nearest to God when he is most perfectly human.

For a fuller understanding of this statement, let it be considered that when a man's whole heart and mind are devoted to material interests, he is living in the abstract material world, and the greater and better

part of his nature remains unoccupied. So, again, if any special appetite or desire absorbs him, he has fallen from the height of his full humanity, with its endless wealth of endowment, and submitted himself to the bondage of a particular passion. The religious recluse also, who, in the effort after God, endeavours to empty his mind of all particular interests, is abstracting from the fulness of life, and raising barriers against that very visitation which he desires. No wonder that so many of those who sought God in this way found nothing but that aridity of soul which they so often deplored. No wonder that *acedia* became a common disease of the mind.

When an act of will is not merely the carrying out of some habitual motion, but is a consciously directed moral decision, it involves the whole personality. First, it determines the whole relation of the man to his material environment. On the outbreak of war, for example, a man decides to devote himself to the service of his country. He gives up his occupation and enters the army. At once everything in his life is changed. His residence, his physical habits, his meals, his handling of material things, undergo a transformation. The decision also determines the man's mental and moral outlook. All his desires and interests must be adjusted to the new situation. He must adopt a new attitude towards life. Mind and character remaining in their main tendencies and qualities the same, have yet to be brought into a new relation to the world of men, and also into a new relation to the man's own hopes and prospects. Any concrete instance will reveal the fact that when moral purpose takes shape in a definite act of will, the whole life with all its physical and mental elements and con-

ditions undergoes a fresh determination. Nothing is really omitted. Nothing remains quite the same. In other words, the act of will is the movement of the whole personality.

Let us apply this to the typical experience in which a human soul finds God. Consider the act of repentance. When, in the course of his experience, a man is awakened to the sense of moral fault, and recognizes his guilt, the feeling of responsibility presses upon him, conscience accuses. Knowing in himself that strange power of initiative which we call freedom, he discerns the fact that he is to blame. An honest conscience always admits this accusation. The plea that temptation was too strong, or that circumstances compelled, or that the fall was due to a state of character over which he had no control, will not be urged by the sincerely penitent soul. Such a man, thinking of God, finds himself in the presence of a perfect ideal, and realizes that his innate sense of responsibility is a witness to its reality. The inevitable result of such a situation is heartfelt confession. It is the vision of God which overwhelms the man in the sorrow of repentance. "Woe is me, for I am undone," cried the prophet, "for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."* "Now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." † "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." ‡ Such is the authentic language of contrition.

But this turning to God in confession, when it is the sincere outcome of conviction, carries with it a definite will to amend. Then it is that, in response

* Isa. vi. 5. † Job xlii. 5, 6. ‡ Ps. li. 4.

to this will, there comes the assurance of Divine pardon.

Now, this will to amend, when it is real, involves the free activity of the whole personality. Into that action the whole life is taken up. All the lines of the man's life pass through it, as through a focus, and produce on the other side a new adjustment of the whole being. The moment of decision which reverses the man's life is the very moment in which he comes face to face with God. Here, then, instead of negation or emptying, we have the personal life in all its fulness. But there is, most certainly, a negation. There is the negation of the lower self—that is, of the evil and self-asserting elements; but that is a negation which makes the full reality possible.

This instance is probably the most striking which could be chosen, but every instance of sincere prayer would yield a similar result in its own degree. Prayer is not an effortless contemplation, nor is it the mere asking for gifts from an Almighty giver. It is an effort of will. In it, when it is real, the full personality engages. It is the expression of a definite determination of the whole moral being. Here we have the principle which contains the justification of prayer both on the subjective side and on the objective. Such a determination must alter the moral relationship between God and the man, and so involve a new adjustment which need not be confined to the moral sphere. If there be moral principle and moral activity at the heart of things, prayer cannot go unanswered. It is one of the chief benefits of the newer thought about the universe that it enables us to realize that both God and man are really alive. If God be indeed a Living God, He cannot but respond to he

moral determinations of human personalities. People who disbelieve in the efficacy of prayer have never got beyond the conception of the universe as an abstract system of forces and laws.

That prayer does involve this moral determination of the whole personality appears very clearly when we discern what may be involved in that particular petition which seeks for no gift but resignation. It might be thought that here is a case in which prayer makes no effort to effect any result. It seems to leave everything unchanged. Such a view is, however, very superficial. The most tremendous prayer in all human history was a prayer for resignation. Christ, confronted by His Cross and passion, cried out, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine. be done." The circumstances of this prayer, its repetition, its relation to the events which followed, the apparent fruitlessness of it: all give it a place of peculiar significance in the life of Christ and in the history of the world. And if ever a prayer gathered up into itself all the elements of a life, it was this.

We conclude, therefore, that it is not any abstracted element of the personality, not any "Divine spark" in the soul, which meets with God: it is the whole personal life in its concrete reality. How, then, can we explain the fact that so many of those who set out to follow the "negative way" really reached the Divine illumination they sought? The answer must be that, like so many other sincere people, their practice was better than their precept. With them, it would appear, the negative way, in practice, amounted to little more than that denial of the appetites and passions which is certainly necessary

for a God-seeking life ; and that, when it was more than this, it was a hindrance, not a help. Also, we must believe that their concentration of all their faculties upon God often led them to that very spiritual situation which we have described. Their capital error lay in renouncing the material world with its wealth of beauty and its infinite disclosure of truth and harmony, the social world with its affections and opportunities for pure happiness and service, family life with its tender humanities, and imagining that these things must come between the soul and God. A better wisdom finds in these the very gateway of heaven.

We have arrived, then, at this conclusion, that the human spirit, when concentrated in moral effort, is capable of realizing the presence of that All-enfolding Divine Life which forms its spiritual environment. Why then, it may be asked, is it that this experience of God is not universally accepted for truth and fact by all thinking people ? The question is very important and demands most careful consideration.

It is not to be supposed that every concentration of purpose, every determination of will, is equally efficacious in this respect. The quality of what we attain depends very largely upon the quality and purpose of our determination. While it may be true that every free decision of the full personality brings us into a special relation to God, it does not follow that the relation so established includes consciousness of His presence, nor correspondence with His character and will. As regards the last element, it may have an opposite effect. Apart from this, however, it is clear that decisions which guide long courses of conduct, and which are good in themselves, may yet be of such

a nature as to involve no consciousness of the All-inclusive Life. A scientific man, for example, plans a long and complicated investigation. Into this purpose he puts all his powers, and to it he makes all other engagements subordinate. It would be unreasonable to expect that such a determination of his personality should necessarily involve the consciousness of God. Just as the concentration of all a man's powers on some special object may render him unconscious of the presence of other human beings, so we may expect it to be in relation to God. The exercise of our faculties is controlled by the purpose we have in view. And this is especially true when we have to do with relations between persons. Our knowledge of one another depends very largely upon sympathy. If we seek to know a man, and approach him with sympathy, we get to know him in a way which is otherwise impossible. So it is also in relation to God. The soul that seeks God finds Him. The decision of the will which is directed towards Him makes possible a great revelation. Thus we see that it is the religious purpose in the soul which draws near to God which makes religious experience possible. This is the principle of Faith, on which religious teaching has ever laid so much stress. It is not an irrational principle. Quite the contrary. As we have seen, it arises inevitably from the nature of knowledge in relation to persons. Only by faith, founded on sympathy and experience, can any soul gain knowledge of another. Knowledge, in the ordinary intellectual sense of the term, or with the meaning which it has when we apply it to our apprehension of sensible things, is inapplicable to our mode of realizing the presence and grasping the character of other human beings. So, only in a far

higher degree, must it be with the knowledge of God.

It is true that the presence of the soul to God is immediate, while the presence of one human person to another is mediated through material and sensible relations. But, so far as we can see, this only strengthens the force of our contention. For the sensible phenomena through which a human presence is mediated are objects of knowledge in the ordinary sense, and so far as revealed in these the human spirit is knowable like other things. It is the deeper knowledge, the knowledge of the character which lies hidden behind the sensible manifestations, which can only be gained by sympathy and faith. And, as the presence of God to the soul lacks altogether the evidence derived from sensible phenomena, we must surely conclude that sympathy and faith are more necessary in the realization of it than in human relationships. The feeling of the Divine Presence must, in fact, be more closely allied to what we call sympathy between human souls than to any other feeling of which we are aware in our ordinary experience.

It is, however, very worthy of our consideration that the moral experience of mankind seems to show an element which may well be regarded as another apprehension of the truth which we are wont to describe as the religious consciousness of the Divine Presence. Students of ethics are aware how difficult it is to explain in the terms of any theory the finest and most characteristic fact of man's moral life. Why should a man sacrifice himself and all that he has for righteousness' sake? Why should a man die for conscience' sake? Why should a man give up all worldly prospects, and devote all his powers to the salvation of

wretches who, in the eye of the world, have no claim upon his love?

Hedonistic and evolutionary systems of ethical thought provide no answer to these questions. Perfectionist ethics, systems which regard moral perfection as the true end of man, and moral activity as his only proper realization, go much nearer to a solution. But it cannot be pretended that any of these doctrines is fully satisfactory. Here religion has no difficulty. Goodness as the character of God, the supreme fact in the whole universe, becomes at once worthy of every sacrifice. But it must be confessed that the moral enthusiasm which Christianity justifies in this fashion is not an exclusively Christian possession. The pagan and the modern sceptic can exhibit it as truly, if not in quite the same fashion nor as frequently, as the Christian. It can coexist with ethical creeds which seem to involve its negation. It was characteristic of such spirits as Plato and John Stuart Mill, as well as of St. Paul or Bishop Berkeley.

There is, in truth, a great conviction behind all such moral heroism. Whatever may be the professed creeds or intellectual prepossessions of those who have it, this implicit conviction is in every case of the same nature. It may be described as the belief that the doing of that which presents itself as the good and the right is of absolute worth and importance, that no advantage which might be gained by other conduct could possibly be worth the sacrifice of the good. And this absoluteness means that, not merely for the individual himself, but for everyone and universally, the thing to be done is, from the moral point of view, possessed of an indefectible necessity. "Here I stand. I can do no other." When duty is revealed, every risk must be taken and

the thing must be done. When truth has to be vindicated, no consideration of consequences must be allowed to stand in the way. To every man who finds himself in such a position and with such a determination there comes the conviction that, though overwhelming human forces may be against him, yet the supreme central reality of things is on his side. He discerns, by some inexplicable insight, often attained by a sudden illumination, that there is a deeper meaning in the universe than that which is superficially apparent—that, though all earthly powers be in opposition, there is some Higher Power, and that the Supreme one, to which truth and right are infinitely precious. He sees by some intuitive perception that, though the world be against him, the eternities and infinities are on his side.

The consciousness of this fact may be found, not merely in the conviction which animates men of supreme moral heroism in their great moments, but in all the nobler teachers who have inspired mankind, and in all the greatest literature. Even Confucius, coldly sceptical and intensely secular as was his thought, recognized a supreme order, vaguely termed Heaven, the source of man's nature and of the laws which should rule in human life. So, again, the teaching of the Buddha, with its total silence as to God and its disbelief in a human soul, with its doctrines of the impermanence of the individual and of salvation through the negation of desire, is yet filled with conviction as to the infinite importance of attaining to truth and of doing the right. For this every sacrifice is worth making. Armed with truth and right, the saviour of men goes forth to heal the sorrow of the world.

These instances serve to show how even in cases which seem to involve the denial of God, moral conviction involves the apprehension of some supreme standard of truth and rightness, in accordance with which all great ends must be accomplished.

In the great age of Greek genius, this apprehension found most wonderful expression in art, philosophy, and literature. Amid conditions which, on the moral side, seem to us strange and incongruous, there flamed up a splendid faith in truth for truth's sake, a glorious realization that behind and above all the shiftings of human opinion there are eternal things whose worth is absolute. Matthew Arnold points out that "there is a century in Greek life—the century preceding the Peloponnesian War, from about the year 530 to the year 430 B.C.—in which poetry made," as it seems to him, "the noblest, the most successful effort she has ever made as the priestess of the imaginative reason." Of "this effort, the four great names are Simonides, Pindar, Æschylus, and Sophocles." "No other poets," he writes, "so well show to the poetry of the present the way it must take; no other poets have lived so much by the imaginative reason; no other poets have made their work so well balanced; no other poets, who have so well satisfied the thinking power, have so well satisfied the religious sense:

"'Oh! that my lot would lead me in the path of holy innocence of word and deed, the path which august laws ordain, laws that in the highest empyrean had their birth, of which heaven is father alone, neither did the race of mortal man beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep. The power of God is mighty in them, and groweth not old.'"*

* M. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, No. VI.

Matthew Arnold himself, in perhaps the greatest of his poems, has finely expressed the same conviction:

"Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask, how *she* view'd thy self-control,
Thy struggling, task'd morality—
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

"And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
'Ah! child!' she cries, 'that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

"'There is no effort on my brow—
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and, when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once—but where?

"'I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod
And lay upon the breast of God.'"

How nobly, too, does Wordsworth in his "Ode to Duty," utter the sense of absolute and eternal significance in the obedience to the right:

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee,
are fresh and strong."

Here is the sense that the voice of duty speaks with the authority of the whole universe. In all these instances, and in the multitude of others which might be gleaned from literature, there is revealed a moral mysticism which is closely related to Christian mysticism, and which, though neither so clear nor so certain as the latter, in its apprehension of the ultimate Reality, is yet a witness to its truth. What Matthew Arnold calls "imaginative reason" is nothing more nor less than the mystical intuition, the apprehension in poetic form of the truth that our human life shares in a greater all-enfolding Life which is akin to us, and in which all of goodness and perfection that we can imagine finds its realization.

It is a remarkable fact that many of those minds which were foremost in promoting the scientific agnosticism so characteristic of the modern world fed their religious instincts with poetry. And the poetry which satisfied their spiritual needs was the poetry which provided a mystical interpretation of Nature and of human life. In Wordsworth and Tennyson especially, Nature-mysticism found its expression. In Browning the same principle was applied to the deeper problems of human existence. Of the former, perhaps the grandest expression is contained in Wordsworth's noble lines written near Tintern Abbey:

> "I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought;
And rolls through all things."

These words have been a veritable creed to multitudes of thoughtful minds who could find no sure footing in the creeds of the Churches. They supplied the medium through which could be gained something of the mystical apprehension of God by direct intuition, rather than by the processes of reason. They helped to give a sacramental character to communion with Nature.

And what Wordsworth and Tennyson did for our intercourse with Nature, Browning did for our experience of human life. He made us feel the immanent Divinity of it:

"Not once beat 'Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what
Thou shalt do!'"

We have seen that man draws nearest to God in his moments of most perfect freedom, when he acts in the fulness of his moral nature. Then it is that he is able to apprehend God, and then it is that Divine help comes to him most fully. This doctrine is strongly contrasted with a doctrine which has been gaining ground and some degree of popularity in recent years —a doctrine which draws its inspiration mainly from some of the investigations of the late Professor James. According to it, Divine help comes to man mainly through the subconscious part of his spiritual organization. The ground for this belief is to be found mainly in a review of cases of sudden conversion which Pro-

fessor James cites. But these cases are, for the most part, pathological. They are abnormal. And it is unsafe to found a theory on the study of the abnormal. In normal repentance the conscious act of the will is, on the human side, the decisive factor. It is this determination which sets going all the processes, conscious and subconscious, which are the human conditions of the change of life which follows. In abnormal cases these processes are mainly subconscious, and the processes which lead up to the change are subconscious. But even Professor James admits that when a change of life occurs as a result of subconscious "incubation," the process which brings it about might have taken place consciously. The cases are not, therefore, as distinct as is sometimes imagined. Further, at the decisive moment there must be an act of will if the change is to have a genuinely moral character. It is therefore difficult to see how the subconscious can be, in any distinctive way, an organ for the Divine intervention. It is also worthy of note that the plausibility of the theory is very largely due to the use of material imagery to describe the relation of the subconscious to the conscious. What that relation really is we have considered above.

We hold, then, to the principle that man draws nearest to God in his moments of moral decision, when he acts with the fulness of his personal life. Then it is that he can apprehend the Divine Presence, and come most fully under the Divine influence.

A remarkable conclusion follows: There is no conflict between Divine assistance and human freedom. The will of God is most perfectly realized in human life in those moments when the will of man acts most fully on its own powers of free initiative. It is exactly

what St. Paul teaches in one of the greatest of his sayings: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure."

And here once more comes into view the truth which is the explanation of all our fundamental difficulties. God in His ultimate nature is higher in the scale of reality than man. He is personal and also more than personal. He is at the summit of all degrees of reality; man is not. If God were personal merely in the sense in which that term is applied to man, He would be but one among many. A final harmony would be impossible. It is the supposition that He is but one person among many which gives rise to the problem of evil, and which seems to bring His will and man's into rivalry. When it is discerned that all the lines of experience converge upon this result, that in God reality reaches a final degree of concreteness which is above the concreteness of man's personal life, then we understand why it is that all those problems which involve the multitude of wills must end in hopeless antinomy as long as He is simply regarded as personal will in the human sense. We imagine that He is "even such an one as ourselves," and so create the problems which puzzle us. But when we take into consideration the existence of a degree of reality higher than that in which our human life is passed, we see at once that on that level the contradictions which perplex us here, arising as they do out of the nature of the characteristic form of personality, must find their resolution. Therefore it is that there is no essential opposition between the will of man and God; and therefore, also, it is that when human will is fully and freely exercised in the

right way, it becomes the means of bringing man into closest relation with God. In other words, man draws nearest to God when his human powers are most fully exercised. Then it is that he is able to apprehend God's presence, and enter into harmony with the Divine Life.

CHAPTER XII

HISTORY, NATURAL AND HUMAN

The revelation of God in history is too vast a subject to be treated here. There is a great literature which deals with it, a literature which is continually growing. The origin and development of religious ideas; the study of comparative religion; the relation of the philosophies of the West to those of the East, and the relation of both to paganism and to Christianity; the spiritual and social conditions which prepared the way for Christ; and the history of the Christian Church itself—all these immense studies would be included in a general examination of the way in which mankind gained those conceptions of God and those religious beliefs which prevail in the world to-day. In relation to all these departments of research a new seriousness and hopefulness, and a new thoroughness, have manifested themselves in recent times. It is universally recognized that, for the student of the humanities, nothing is more important than the investigation of religious beliefs and religious experience. Religion can no longer be dismissed by any serious student as a matter of comparative unimportance. Whatever be the explanation of the phenomena, their human value and significance, and the intimacy of their implication in all phases of social life, can no longer be ignored or denied.

It is, however, quite another matter to believe that history contains a real revelation of truth about the ultimate meaning and purpose of the universe. The value of history as an account of human experience is one thing, its value as a manifestation of God is quite another. Are we justified in believing that history contains a revelation of God? That is the question we have to consider.

It is clear that when we think of history in this way we cannot confine our thoughts to human history. The history of the human race is but a part, even though it be the most important part, of universal history. Modern science has reduced all its departments but the most abstract to history. That is the meaning and effect of evolution as a description of universal process. If, therefore, we wish to examine the story of the world with a view to discovering whether it contains a revelation of God, we must take that story as a whole, so far as we are acquainted with it. We shall expect, of course, that the clearest and fullest part of the revelation will take place in the more advanced portion of the universal process, but we cannot believe that only there are to be found indications of Divine power and character.

There is a wider, and also a narrower, sense of the term "revelation." Traditionally, we are accustomed to use the word in the narrower sense. By revelation is usually meant a Divine intervention for the express purpose of conveying knowledge of God to man. So it is that we speak of the Christian revelation. On the other hand, we can speak of the whole creation as a revelation of God in the sense that, as it is His work or —may we say?—the expression of His will, it must bear the marks of His nature. If the whole universe be

the outcome of the Divine activity, it must reveal the character of that activity, if we have faculties to discern it.

A deeper consideration seems to show that the conception of revelation as a special Divine intervention is really a part of the old outgrown doctrine of transcendence. When the world is regarded as a mechanical system working according to an order impressed upon it at a definite beginning in the remote past, a Divine intervention for the purposes of demonstration or correction is an almost inevitable idea to a believer in God. When the clock goes wrong, the clockmaker must intervene to put it right. If the world be conceived as a stupendous clock, then it has certainly gone wrong, and intervention is a necessity. But this whole mode of conceiving the relation of God to the world is erroneous. God is indeed transcendent, but it is in another and higher meaning of the term. He is also the immanent life of the universe in a manner which we represent to our minds by our own relation to our experience.

If this be so, we must employ the word "revelation" in the wider sense. We must think of God as manifesting Himself in creation, because He is the Life of all that is; and if there occurred special epochs of revelation, as every Christian believes, then those epochs were moments of consummation in which agelong processes reached their climax. They were not breaches in the universal order.

Before we think of the facts of natural and human history with a view to considering their value as a revelation of the character of God, there is another preliminary question of much importance which must be answered. How can the history of the material

universe contain a revelation of God? We have seen that things in space, forming a connected system, are an abstract element of experience. We get to them by abstracting from the fulness of our conscious experience. The mechanical form which belongs to material things is essentially abstract. Life in its concrete reality is not mechanical at all. Now, God is Life. He is Life in a sense higher than that in which we apply this term to our own form of existence. The degree of reality possessed by His Life is higher than that possessed by ours. How, then, can we find His character in a realm which is relatively to Him even more abstract than it is in relation to us? What we are considering here is just this: Is it open to us, on the principles which have guided us all through, to ask the ordinary questions of natural theology, and to find satisfaction in answers which would appeal to those who seek proofs of God's Being and attributes in Nature? Are not the methods of those who seek proofs of God's Being from design in Nature, or from the contingency of the world, or from the order or events of history, or the moral nature of man, quite inconsistent with the methods of that philosophy which has yielded the results which have been set forth above? The former, it may appear, are essentially based upon principles—such as the principle of causation—which hold only within abstract spheres of experience; while the latter is based on the character of our concrete experience as a whole, and the conditions which make that experience possible.

Kant found all such proofs defective, because fundamentally contradictory, their inconsistency being simply due to the fact just stated. Herbert Spencer reaches his agnostic position in a similar way, by exhibiting

the contradictions involved in all the ideas which we use to describe the Divine Nature. Why, then, should we venture into a region beset with such difficulties? The answer is that we must deal with these problems. We cannot leave them out. To omit them would be to raise a strong presumption of a very serious kind against the whole scheme of our thought as presented hitherto. If religion can justify itself only in high metaphysics, and can never venture to face the questions which arise inevitably out of ordinary intelligent observation, there is ground for a strong objection against both religion and metaphysics. To the mind of common sense, it is perfectly clear that if the universe be indeed due to the activity of a Supreme Spirit who can in any intelligible sense be described as Wise and Good, this wisdom and goodness must be somehow evident to those who examine creation with sufficient care. If no real marks of wisdom and goodness can be traced in the plan of the universe, if things seem to happen anyhow, or in such a way as to have no reference to the welfare of sensitive and spiritual beings, it is a powerful argument against the religious belief in God.

Here is the foundation of modern Agnosticism. The modern scientific view of the world seemed to sweep away the old proof from the adaptation of means to ends in Nature. It yielded a conception which seemed to make mechanical forces in the physical order, and chance variation in the organic realm, the explanation of all that formerly seemed to point to intelligent and benevolent design. When, in addition, we consider the force of such a demonstration of the inconsistency of the ideas by means of which men usually conceive of God's nature as is contained in the earlier part

of Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*, it is impossible to wonder that the conclusion at which Spencer arrived commended itself to multitudes of thoughtful people.

Yet Spencer's statement is itself contradictory. "The Power which the Universe manifests to us," he concludes, "is utterly inscrutable."* If it be in any sense manifested, how is it utterly inscrutable? It is clear that if we are to believe in any power, other than purely mechanical forces or accidental groupings of such forces, behind the system of the universe, the character of that power must somehow appear. Even Spencer could not frame a sentence to convey his Agnostic creed without implicitly making the admission. St. Paul's statement that "the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity,"† is much more consonant with reason and common sense than Spencer's. If there be any such Power as Spencer imagines, creation must in some way or other manifest the character of that Power. If no character can be discerned, it is a strong proof that no such Power exists. Atheism is a more reasonable conclusion from Spencer's arguments than Agnosticism.

In relation to the mode of presentation adopted throughout our investigation, the position is as follows: The material world, regarded in complete abstraction from human life, assumes the form of a mechanical system ordered in accordance with laws which are characterized by an iron necessity. Here is no possibility of the expression of character. But the reason is that we are dealing with a system which is purely

* H. Spencer, *op. cit.*, chap. ii. † Rom. i. 20 (R.V.).

abstract. In actual experience, the material world never assumes this form. It is always subordinate, more or less, to human mind and purpose. As we have seen, the most remarkable feature of human dealing with Nature is the manner in which natural forces have been subdued and made to subserve the uses of human life; and, as we saw, the ground of this subjugation is simply that very inflexibility of natural law which seems at first sight so repellent, when regarded in abstraction. Consider the immediate material environment of any human individual; or, more widely, consider any individual's peculiar relation to the whole material world, in so far as it enters into his experience, and it will be found that it expresses his character with extraordinary accuracy. Go into a man's house, examine his study, look at his bookshelves, at the pictures on the walls, the arrangement of the things he constantly touches, observe his dress, his writing, and other details of his use of the material world, and you will be able to form a very good estimate of who and what he is. So it is also with human characteristics in general. They find their expression in the manner in which human life takes up into itself certain parts of the material world and transforms them. The use of things for human purposes makes them a means of human expression. Every race of men, every human ethos, stamps its peculiar nature on its material environment. We visit the temples and tombs of Egypt that we may enter into the spirit of that ancient civilization. We find the genius of Greece mirrored in her sculptures and architecture. We detect the mind and will of ancient Rome in the wonderful remains of her works. We taste the soul of Italy in Florence and Venice.

If, then, there is a Great Spirit which is the Supreme Reality of the whole universe, we must expect to find in the material world, and, in due degree, in all grades of reality, some indication of the nature of that Spirit. We can go further, and say that, if there is any reason at all to speak of a Power to which creation is due, the character of that Power must find some expression in the universe.

For us, having seen reason to believe that the nature of our experience points to the existence of a great Universal Life as the Supreme Reality, it is of the utmost importance to consider whether the creative processes of the world reveal a character corresponding to this conclusion. Do we find marks of wisdom and goodness, or other qualities which would prove that personal interests are not alien to the Supreme Power? Do we find, as development proceeds, that there is a tendency towards ends which have value for spiritual beings only? Can we trace a good purpose in the universal process? Our religion teaches us to think of God as a Supreme Father, a Being whose chief characteristic is a boundless love, a Sovereign Providence whose care extends over all His sensitive creatures. If this doctrine be true, we may well expect to find indications of this great Divine Love in all our experience of the world and of life. Also, we should expect to find truth and goodness necessarily involved in the very structure of the universe. Can we say that our observation of the general nature and constitution of things fulfils this expectation?

Many thoughtful minds have come to the conclusion that these great assertions and splendid hopes of the Christian faith are not justified in experience. Christ declares of the sparrows that "not one of them is

forgotten in the sight of God." But in the great processes of Nature, as revealed by modern science, myriads of generations of such creatures perish and are forgotten.

In the economy of the organic world, sensitive living things are produced in millions of millions only to serve as food or to be exterminated. In human life, the same production of swarming millions and the same ruthless disregard of their feelings may, it is alleged, be discerned. A crowning instance is presented by the events of our own time. After centuries of Christian preaching and profession, and in an age which has proved itself singularly careful of human life, and peculiarly sensitive in relation to pain—an age of widespread humanitarian effort—we see vast populations hurled at one another in a war of the most gigantic proportions. We see the sudden springing up, under these new conditions, of a merciless determination to win at all costs of misery, suffering, and desolation. In a moment pity seemed to vanish, the kindly influences of Christian civilization proved helpless; brutal, lawless force was let loose on the world. And why? Natural causes at work, replies the cold scientific mind, the pressure of growing populations and of higher standards of living: these are the forces which produced the cataclysm. Man, with his high moral and social ideas, tried for generations to avoid such disasters. He endeavoured to cultivate kindliness and good-fellowship amongst his kind. But Nature defeated him. All the while she was at work, and, when the critical moment was reached, his good intentions went for nothing.

We have already considered this question in its relation to the problem of pain. We have now to give it,

however briefly, a wider consideration. In this endeavour there are certain limitations which must be kept in view. First, we have reason to believe that it would be utterly impossible for us to attain to a complete view of the system of the universe so as to satisfy ourselves in every respect as to the wisdom and goodness of the whole. The old theologians were accustomed to think of the "scheme of the Divine government." Bishop Butler wisely held that it is "a scheme beyond our comprehension." We have seen reasons which justify his opinion. We have seen that, wherever we turn, in our examination of ultimate problems, we discover elements which lead to the conclusion that the final constitution of things is at a level of reality higher than that of our experience. It is for this reason that we cannot completely solve the problem of our freedom in its relation to God and to our fellow-men, and that the problem of evil has baffled all the efforts of philosophers. A complete theodicy is impossible, as long as our faculties remain as they are. There is a sphere in which we are wisely and rightly agnostic.

Secondly, particular instances of apparent goodness on the one hand, or of apparent disregard or ruthlessness on the other, prove nothing. The scale of the universe is so vast, and our powers of observation and understanding are so limited, that we are always unable to estimate the real significance of the individual case. In addition to this, belief in a future life alters the problem so completely, in relation to our present faculties, that we may fairly say that a judgment based on earthly principles and experiences is of no value in relation to God in His dealing with the soul of a man.

In former days, natural theology devoted a great deal of attention to particular instances of the adaptation of means to ends in Nature. On the basis of this argument a proof of the Divine wisdom and goodness was founded. The doctrine of evolution, as we have seen, showed conclusively that this argument could no longer be presented in its old form. When it appeared that the adaptation of means to ends could be explained as due to the working out of a great world-wide process, the particular instance lost its value—the nature of the whole had to be considered.

This illustration shows the way. If we are to form any judgment worth having on the character of the Supreme Power as displayed in creation, we must endeavour to grasp fundamental principles, or, at all events, obtain large views of the nature and tendency of the universal process. When examined in this way, it will be found that Nature and life yield very clear indications of a character, a wisdom, and goodness altogether in harmony with the greatness of the Universal Spirit.

First, we can discern a principle which is found to be involved in all our experience of the world and of human life. The Supreme Power is trustworthy. In the earlier days of human observation of Nature this characteristic was not apparent. Man expected to find the world filled with the influences of capricious spiritual powers. The savage mind does not expect constancy in things. His animistic mode of regarding natural objects leads him to suspect the operation of spirits in all events. These spirits are conceived as quite as uncertain and impulsive as he is himself. They are easily angered or pleased. Religion consists in the use of charms and magic rites which are sup-

posed to have a moderating effect upon them. With the advance of knowledge this conception of Nature disappears. Man gradually discovers that natural forces obey certain laws, and are constant in the mode of their operation. On this discovery all science is based. By means of this principle man finds he can subdue the material world. With reflection comes the further discovery that the principle which thus comes to light is fundamental in all knowledge. The world and human life and all the elements they contain rest upon a trustworthy foundation—a framework of principle upon which we can absolutely rely. This we call truth. Its nature is such that we can depend upon it. Experience convinces us that when we have arrived at truth we have attained that which will not fail us. What is true to-day will be true to-morrow. Holding fast to truth, we believe we shall never be put to shame.

The same principle may be traced in our moral experience. If man is to lead a social life as a human being, certain rules must be observed. He must keep faith with his neighbour, defend the community when it is attacked, do his share in providing for the common needs. There must be a law, and the law must be kept. There is something in his nature which responds to the claim of the law. The man recognizes the call of duty, the call to obedience. If he disobey, he admits his responsibility, and submits to punishment. As reflection proceeds, man finds within himself an implicit recognition of the law and its demands. Conscience has been awakened. On the trustworthiness of this recognition of moral responsibility all social life is built. However the scientific moralist may explain it, the fact cannot be questioned. All

human institutions depend on faith in certain principles involved in man's inner constitution. Here again is witness to the statement that there is an order in things, and that order is trustworthy.*

Whatever, then, be the ultimate nature of the Power which is at work in the universe, we have reason to think of that Power as essentially trustworthy. However we may explain it, this quality of trustworthiness is clearly manifested. And every advance of knowledge adds to the strength of the evidence. So overwhelming is this evidence that it leads men to think of the universe as through and through, and in every respect, a system of forces absolutely controlled by unchangeable law. This extreme conclusion is, as we have seen, an error, because it takes no proper account of the life and experience of living and conscious beings. Since these latter elements must be included in the whole, we cannot explain the trustworthiness of the universe as a merely mechanical regularity. There must be some other explanation.

When we apply the historical method of modern science to the whole succession of events, so far as that succession has been traced, we arrive at a statement which carries us a step further. Creation is an age-long process. From dim beginnings in, possibly, some primeval fire-mist, through the formation and consolidation of suns and planets, through slowly acquired adaptations of the surface of the globe, through millions of generations of living creatures, through human development from its most primitive forms up to our highly complex modern civilization, the present state of things has been brought about. There is much in this great history which is still very debatable. There

* See Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, second series, lecture v.

is also much dispute about the principles which are involved in it, and the nature of the causes which have effected it. It is not even agreed that it is to be regarded as a continuous evolution. Some authorities hold that, at certain epochs, new creative beginnings of a special and distinct kind took place.

We need not, for our present purpose, trouble ourselves with such problems. The order of the main elements is sufficient. What we have here is a great upward movement culminating in the highly organized world that we know. How was that result reached? The following may be noted as the main stages in the vast process: Unstable material conditions; worlds which have assumed a high degree of stability; on the earth, conditions of temperature and moisture fitted for life; the appearance of life; life dividing itself into vegetable and animal forms, the former providing the main food-supply for the latter; sensitive and conscious life; moral and social life appearing in the human species; civilization, involving, in its better forms, the development of lofty ideas of value —æsthetic, moral, social, religious.

It is not easy to see how any reasonable being can regard such a result as this as the consequence of a merely accidental grouping of mechanical forces. Only a complete preoccupation of mind with certain abstract mechanical ideas could make such an explanation possible. By those who reject this explanation this great world-order must surely be regarded as containing some revelation of the nature of the Power which is at work throughout. There is clearly a unity of some kind pervading the whole. What is the character of that unity? M. Bergson, who possesses probably the most penetrating intellect of the present day,

thinks of this unity as an all-pervading vital impulse. The multitude and diversity of the lines along which life develops seem to him to show that the unity is rather a push behind than a purpose in advance. We have dealt to some extent already with this view of the question. Here we may be permitted to add that the theory of the vital impulse, however explanatory it may seem of the multitude of diverging lines along which the lower forms of life developed, does not seem to provide a sufficiently concrete principle when the whole creative process is taken into consideration. What about the immense development of the material world before life appeared? And what about the inner nature of life itself, in its highest accessible form, as found in the living conscious experience of man? M. Bergson's biological views do not seem to agree perfectly with his psychology and his philosophy. The latter demand that life in its full concrete reality should be the most concrete of all realities; the former, in the doctrine of the vital impulse, seem to reduce life to an abstraction. If life in its full reality, so far as our experience goes, is found in human experience, then the life which is the explanatory principle of the whole natural process must be understood by reference to the essential nature of that experience—that is, human personality is the best guide to the meaning of the whole process.

Apart altogether from M. Bergson's doctrine, and considering the great creative process in its main outlines from the standpoint of common sense, the indication which it yields is very remarkable. It shows a universal movement upwards from material conditions of a low order, through the whole series of living forms, to man and human society. The vast

extent of this movement, the innumerable multitude of the factors involved in it, the distance which separates the lower forms of unorganized matter from highly organized human life, all convey the impression of a supreme guiding purpose immanent in the whole, or somehow superintending it. It is difficult for the unbiassed mind to escape the conviction that the Power which is manifested in this great ordered progress is a power which intended to produce spiritual and social life, a Being to whom the spiritual, with all its wealth of attainment, is an end greatly prized.

It may seem that this is merely reading our own ideas into the universal process; but that is exactly what we are bound to do, since man stands as the final term of the whole. That the full interpretation is to be found in a Reality higher than man we have seen reason to believe. The important point is that it cannot be found below him. The final meaning is better, not worse, than our dreams.

Taking, then, the course of evolution so far as it has gone, and endeavouring to grasp the character or meaning of the whole, we find our best clue in the highest point which it has reached. That highest point is moral and social life at its best. Here is an idea which is in accordance with all the best human thought. The vision of a Utopia, a perfected society, has ever presented itself to the prophets and dreamers among men as the supreme end towards which all the highest efforts should be directed. Plato, in his *Republic*, expressed the thought of his own age on this subject in the noblest fashion. Christianity has given to the world the glorious conception of the kingdom of God, a Divine rule under which the inner life of the individual and the organized life of society

are to be brought to harmony and perfection. The kingdom, as the rule of God in the heart of each man and at the same time amongst men, is the leading idea of Christ's teaching. It provides a principle for our guidance in this world and a promise of greater things in the next. The kingdom of God is the working out of the principle of love. Its future perfection will be love realized—a state of existence in which the good of each and the good of all will be identified.

This great idea provides an adequate interpretation of the meaning of the universal process when regarded as a whole. It is by far the most complete interpretation ever given. While it must be admitted that it does not fully explain many details, and that certain elements—such as pain and evil—seem definitely inconsistent with it, it gives a meaning to the main outlines and principal stages of the great ascent of creation which will be sought in vain elsewhere.

If this be correct, it must be admitted that, when large views of the creative process are taken, we obtain a sufficiently clear indication of the character of the Supreme Power. We learn to think of Him—for this pronoun now becomes inevitable—as One who is utterly trustworthy, who prizes spiritual excellence above all things, and who through all the ages of natural and human history has been making all events subserve the production of a kingdom, a great social order, in which love shall be perfected.

The one strong objection which can be urged against this view is the difficulty created by the two evils, pain and sin. With these problems we have already dealt so far as space permitted. We have seen that their total effect is to add force to certain other considerations which compelled us to believe that, while

we can rightly speak of God as possessed of Personality in the highest degree, we must also believe that this idea does not fully express His nature.

It is very interesting to observe that this wide view of the creative process helps us to discern, not merely the wisdom and power, but the goodness of God. The divines of the eighteenth century laid great stress on the witness of creation to the benevolence of the Deity. So clear did they consider this witness, that, to some of them, the Christian revelation seemed unnecessary. The light of Nature appeared sufficient for all practical purposes. With the scientific developments of the nineteenth century came the suspicion that while the light of Nature might perhaps prove the wisdom and power of God, it could provide no proof of His goodness. The agelong struggle for existence, the vast welter of greed and pain, to which biological science traced the wonderful adaptations of organisms to their environment, seemed a very formidable objection against the comfortable doctrines of the Deist:

> "Nature, red in tooth and claw
> With ravine, shriek'd against his creed."

Now we can rise to a higher point of view and see that both sides in this antagonism are taken up into a fuller conception. Throughout the struggle of the ages, good is being accomplished by means of sacrifice. Life is being won through death. Through conflict, and the pain which conflict brings, the Supreme Power is working out the coming of the kingdom of Love. If we desire, from contemplation of the whole process, to know something of His nature, we must arrive at our knowledge, not from the struggles of the past, nor from the pains and disappointments of the present, but

from the tendency of the whole as revealed in the relation of the successive stages to one another and in the nature of the best result already produced.

The terrible social upheavals which occur from time to time make us feel how far we are from the full realization of the great purpose, but they afford no reason for the rejection of this great conclusion. That, in this twentieth century, the civilized world should be convulsed by a war so dreadful in all its circumstances as that now raging, however bitterly the fact may disappoint the high hopes of many hearts, is no reason for despair. With all its terror and sorrow, the war has proved that the manhood of our race is as strong as ever. It has shown that we are as capable of resolution in the pursuit of what is presented to us as our duty as were our forefathers. No frightfulness has had the slightest effect in the way of shaking our determination or inspiring fear. Never did men and women show a greater capacity for self-sacrifice. Further, in the case of some of the nations involved, there are evidences that the moral effort demanded has had a purifying and ennobling influence.

These facts do not prove that war is good, or even a necessary evil. What they really show is that, even in the darkest times, may be discerned proofs of the existence of the Light which lighteth every man. There is a moral purpose dominating all and overruling all evils. Through the sufferings of the present state of things is being prepared a glory that shall be revealed. Under the Providence of God the great rule of Sacrifice is working out a final blessedness.

When we have gained this view of the inner meaning and purpose of the great natural order, we are in a position to turn to human history and consider whether

it can be regarded as in a more special way a means of conveying a revelation of God. Hitherto we have been examining the whole course of natural and human history as science discloses it, using our present highly developed knowledge as the means of interpretation. We have now to think of how the growing intelligence of the human race dealt with its experience of the natural order of things as a manifestation of powers other than material. The mind of man is never content to accept the facts of the material world as mere facts. It never rests content with the given. It ever seeks some power behind the immediate experience.

It is now admitted that the primitive mind is essentially animistic. Its tendency is to believe in the activity of spiritual powers as the source of all natural phenomena. Belief in the human soul, and in its survival of death, appears to be universal amongst primitive peoples. The soul is conceived in ways which are to us fantastic and almost materialistic, identified with the shadow, or with the reflection in still water, or with the breath; but its distinction from the living body is always perfectly clear. Knowing in himself the powers of thought and will, and feeling his own spontaneity, the savage attributes like powers to such natural objects as attract his attention in any special way. The river, the tree, the mountain, the sun and moon, are all supposed to be either themselves animated, or to be the abodes or possessions of spiritual beings. Out of this conception arises, in most cases, a religion whose chief emotion is fear. The spirits of natural objects, and the spirits of the dead, are supposed to be, for the most part, malignant or dangerous, easily moved to wrath or jealousy. Hence springs the idea of propitiation. The spirits must

be pleased with offerings or restrained by such magical rites as are supposed to have influence upon them.

It is clear that ideas of this sort naturally pass into polytheism. Yet polytheistic faiths may contain other elements. Tribal and national heroes are sometimes exalted into deities. Also when the whole world is thought to be peopled with spirits, it is inevitable that many of these should be personified in a human sense, and conceived as possessed of human form. Also, there arises inevitably the idea of grades and hierarchies of gods; and hence belief in chief deities, mighty beings, human in form, but superhuman in power. All these elements can be easily traced in polytheistic religions.

Most important is the step from polytheism to monotheism. Regarding this transition in a purely academic way, it seems easy to pass from the idea of a great sovereign deity such as Zeus, or such as the great Sun-god of Egypt and other Eastern lands, to the conception of one Supreme and only God. But, strange to say, the transition has not often been effected, and, when effected, has been difficult to maintain. It is true that in the higher developments of Greek thought, men rose to the belief in a *μορφὴ μία* of "many names." It is true also that in India philosophic theology was able to attain to a similar elevation.

But such instances are clearly cases of special insight. They are due to the spiritual capacity of individuals, or of specially gifted classes or communities. Only in the religions which draw their inspiration from Judaism did the monotheistic creed become a really effective human possession. One notable

exception may perhaps be found in the Amida worship of popular Buddhism in China and Japan. The ideas of this creed are so close in many respects to those of Christianity, that some well-informed writers regard it as having arisen out of Buddhism under Christian influence. This influence is supposed to have come through Northern India in the early Christian centuries.* Others hold that it is a spontaneous development. Whichever account be correct, the existence of this creed as a popular religion is as remarkable as it is unique.

The truth is that monotheism is a difficult faith. The history of Israel shows how hard was the struggle by which it was maintained amongst that people who were destined to become the means of its propagation throughout the world. Only through the splendid faith and zeal of the Hebrew prophets, and the terribly severe discipline through which the Hebrew race passed, was the great creed expressed by the words, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," fastened in the national mind and heart. From Israel the monotheistic faith passed to Christianity and to Islam, and so became the possession of the modern world. Yet even in the modern world it is a difficult faith. For our experience of life does not give the impression of a single consistent Principle pervading and controlling the whole. Man finds himself in a world which is, apparently, full of inconsistent warring agencies and principles. Life and death, good and evil, health and disease, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, success and disappointment, are mingled together in endless confusion. To the mind of the primitive animist all these seem to be due to the opera-

* See Arthur Lloyd, *The Creed of Half Japan.*

tion of a multitude of more or less discordant spiritual powers. The pagan interpretation of life presents itself as a perfectly obvious truth. All polytheistic religions bear the mark of this way of dealing with the facts and puzzles of life. In the Zoroastrian conception of two great principles, one good, the other evil, the strife between which occasions all the confusions of the world, this mode of thought reaches its culmination. Paganism is the natural religion of undisciplined common sense. How can this world, with its contradictions and inconsistencies, be the work of one great and good God? Far more obvious is the supposition of a multitude of divine beings, great and small. So common sense, when left to its own unaided mother-wit, always decides. Monotheism is a victory of faith over common sense. The term "faith" is here quite appropriate. The principle at work might, however, with almost equal suitability, be termed reason, or, with Matthew Arnold, "imaginative reason." It is the principle which aims at unity, the tendency which drives the thoughtful mind ever onwards towards simplification. In the practical sphere, it is the regulative principle which bases all effort on the implicit supposition that the universe is ultimately trustworthy. When thus regarded it may well be called faith—the fundamental faith which underlies all thought and life. The advance from pagan polytheism to monotheism is therefore a great victory of faith.

When this advance has taken place, man enters on a new era; order takes the place of confusion, security succeeds anarchy; the clouds scatter, the heavens grow clear above human life. Here is the secret of the power of Islam in relation to pagan peoples. It undoubtedly comes to them with a great gift of moral

strength. It transforms the animistic African savage into a Moslem warrior of formidable powers.

In a far higher way the Christian monotheism has become a veritable charter of liberty to those primitive animistic races who have received it. For them it brings deliverance from a life overshadowed by the terrors of a world of malignant spirits. When the one supreme Almighty God takes the place of that horrible spirit-world, there comes a new sense of security and freedom. And when to this is added the Christian belief in God's essential love, the triumph of faith is complete. The testimony of missionaries and converts to this liberation of the soul, through the substitution of the Christian doctrine of the Fatherhood of the one and only God for the old doctrine of demons, is overwhelming. Here we see in actual operation that principle of faith which we have already considered in general terms.

Faith in this sense is in truth, the very eye of the soul in relation to religious experience. It deals with the facts of life, not as intelligence reasoning out the causes of things, but as trust interpreting all that happens in accordance with its own nature. It is the conviction that, however difficult and uncertain the conditions of life may seem to be, there is a fundamental trustworthiness at the centre of things. Therefore, in all apparently fundamental contradictions, faith holds to the belief that there must be a final reconciliation. It is essentially a unifying principle. It is, in fact, reason applied to the deeper problems—the problems before which intelligence falls helpless. Faith is a method of dealing with the great human experiences.

When faith in God as the one supreme Almighty

Being, wise and good, has been attained there follows an inevitable reaction upon the whole view of human life. The course of events cannot be regarded apart from Him. His activity must be traced in experience, and especially in the central current of the stream of human history. How has faith dealt with this problem? The answer is to be found in the records of Christianity.

The manner in which the three great lines of development in the ancient world meet in Christ and in the movement which sprang from Him has been frequently and most impressively set forth. Jewish religion, Greek thought, and Roman rule prepared the way for the Gospel. Christianity inherited the faith of Israel, absorbed the philosophy of Greece, and by the Roman Empire every valley was exalted, and every mountain and hill were brought low, the crooked was made straight, and the rough places plain, so that all flesh might see the salvation of God. If we can speak at all of a main stream in human history, we must find it here.

As to the facts of the life of Christ and the labours of His immediate followers, modern criticism has been very busy in the examination of them. The net result is that the efforts which were made to reduce the accounts of them to myth, or to separate the records by a long interval from the epoch to which they refer, have broken down. The New Testament has stood the test of a thoroughgoing criticism in a manner which may well excite wonder and confidence.

Here we take those things for granted, and are concerned only with the way in which the thought of mankind dealt with the facts. Again the principle involved was that faith of which we have already

considered the nature. The character, words, works, and death of Jesus presented a problem of amazing difficulty. The simplicity, truth, and elevation of His character; the penetrating quality of His teaching; the claims which He made for Himself; the influence of His personality; the circumstances of His death; the conviction of His Resurrection: these things produced a unique impression upon the minds of those who experienced them, and through them upon the world. How were they to be explained? Only two explanations were possible. Either Jesus, the best, purest, holiest, most saving influence in human experience, was a self-deceived enthusiast, or He was what He professed to be. Faith triumphed by putting the highest possible interpretation upon His life and death. Every other interpretation failed, and must ever fail. The history of all heresies is the history of the efforts to find some lower interpretation.

When we are dealing with God the highest interpretation must always be the truest. For the highest interpretation is that which involves the greatest degree of unity and concreteness. If all the thoughts of man about the power with which he finds himself confronted in his experience, from the most primitive demonism, or the barest materialism upwards, were arranged in a series of grades, according to the degree of unity and concreteness which they attained, it would be found that the Christian Faith occupies the highest position of all. It is the highest possible interpretation of history. It attains the highest unity, by means of its doctrines of Incarnation and of the Trinity. It possesses the greatest concreteness, because, according to it, God takes up into Himself the material, the spiritual, and the social, and that

into an ultimate and absolute concrete Life which is essentially One. Christianity regarded in this way is found to be the complete victory of that fundamental faith on which our whole intellectual and practical life is based. Encountering problem after problem, faith moves ever onwards from step to step, from victory to victory, until, grappling with the great world-problem of the fact of Christ, it attains to the one solution by which the ultimate trustworthiness of things can be maintained, and by which a final unity can be justified—the Christian interpretation of life.

As the Christian consciousness came to itself the doctrine of our Lord's Person and the doctrine of His atoning death took shape. These doctrines were but the expression by the mind of the great experience through which faith had passed. The only possible way of escape from the great dilemma was to see, in the life and death of the Just One, God Himself undertaking to deal with the supreme problem of human life, grappling with the forces of evil and overcoming them for man's sake. When this point of view was gained, all that our Lord had said as to His mission, all the hints He had given as to the meaning of His approaching death, the insight which He had granted to His disciples into His own consciousness of God and of Himself in relation to God and man, the solemn leave-taking and institution of the Sacrament—all these received a new illumination. Thus, by means of the faith which trusts God so much that it dares to put the highest possible interpretation upon its experience of His dealing, the greatest of all difficulties was transformed into the greatest possible revelation of Divine Love.

Having gained this position, faith was able to turn

back upon her old conception of God's unity and discern a deeper meaning. God is Love, and Love is the great unifier. And this is the character which faith always attributes to God. The world is full of discords, but faith rests assured that in God there is, and must be, a greater harmony in which those discords find their resolution. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Faith sees God everywhere, but especially in the problems and mysteries of life. He stands "within all shadows," and every difficulty, when rightly dealt with, becomes a further revelation of Him. Thus the Cross of Christ was transformed from the most terrible of tragedies into the most glorious manifestation of Divine Love. A new insight was gained into the nature of God when faith came to discern that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." The very greatness of the difficulty which was overcome contributed to the greatness of the conception of Divine Love which emerged from the overcoming of it, so that it became evident that, far from the Crucifixion being a degradation of God, it was the very sufferings of Christ which were in harmony with the greatness of God. "*It became Him,* for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings."*

Faith, then, is trust in God as supreme Love, as the great unifying principle which overcomes and harmonizes all the dreadful oppositions and discords which confuse the world in which spiritual beings find their experience. And the more perfectly this trust in God is realized, the more fully does faith find itself in possession of a creed in which is expressed the inter-

* Heb. ii. 10.

pretation of the essential stages of human experience in terms of Divine Love.

When we have reached this point we may usefully consider somewhat more particularly, though very briefly, the two great theological conceptions of the Incarnation and the Trinity.

In his ordinary experience, man finds himself cut off from the Supreme Power of the universe by barriers which are apparently impassable. Though conscious that God is the source of his life and nearer than aught else, man is aware of a division and estrangement which seem to create a hopeless separation. God is Infinite, man is finite. Further, God is the source of law, especially of moral law, and man becomes conscious of this fact only to find himself a transgressor of the law. Here is a great opposition between God and man. But it is God's opportunity, and it is also faith's opportunity. Faith, laying hold upon the greatest facts in history, finds the love of God most gloriously revealed in the person of Christ, and putting the highest interpretation on the facts, rises to the belief that, in Christ, God and man are inseparably united. A deeper thought discovers in the Incarnation, not merely man's union with God accomplished, but that union revealed as the deepest truth of man's spiritual being.

It has not perhaps been sufficiently considered, in view of modern scientific thought, that the Incarnation is the necessary complement of monotheism. Polytheistic deities, as conceived by those who believe in them, are in character, and, even in their relation to the universe, not so far removed from man as to prevent him feeling some degree of kinship with them. But when men come to believe in one only and uni-

versal Deity, God is necessarily conceived as a Being immeasurably great. In character, and in His relation to the universe, He seems to recede from man—to become vast, vague, and out of touch with human things; and the greater the knowledge man possesses of the extent of the universe, the greater will be the change in this respect. The uneducated Moslem finds it easy to think of God as a great superhuman despot enthroned above the world. The cultivated Unitarian cannot hold that simple creed. Suppose that the Christian revelation had never taken place, and that the Jewish monotheism had become the religion of the modern world. Let us imagine that this doctrine had endured in its pure form until modern science had revealed the vast extent and duration of the physical universe. Is it not evident at once that we should find it extremely difficult to believe that the Great Spirit which rules and animates such a universe could be mindful of creatures so small and short-lived as ourselves? Even as it is, this difficulty disturbs multitudes. What would have been its effect apart from the existence in the world of great organized bodies of believers in the Incarnation? Theism in its Unitarian form is a definite, clear-cut doctrine of God. It is incompatible with any degree of Agnosticism. God conceived as a solitary Supreme Person, whether over against the universe as in the old Deism or immanent in the universe in the fashion dear to some modern idealists, does not correspond with the demands of the mind which has entered into the great scientific revelation of the physical and animate universe. The world is not a clearly outlined intelligible whole. As we have seen, no theodicy, or reasoned account of the Divine administration, is possible. If

it be argued that this is because of God's exceeding greatness and the vastness of the universe, then its meaning is that God is so far removed from us that we have no right to claim kinship with Him, or to imagine that our concerns are of any special moment in His sight. The Incarnation, on the other hand, solves the difficulty, and yet leaves room for that ultimate Agnosticism which all modern investigation forces upon our minds. This truth becomes more evident when we pursue the problem to its final issue in the doctrine of the Trinity. Deism professed to know all about God. The Christian doctrine dares to make certain great assertions, and then veils its face in the presence of a mystery which it recognizes as too great for human faculties to penetrate.

The most comprehensive result of the exercise of that faith which grasps the trustworthy, or unifying, nature of God is to be found in the doctrine of the Trinity. To superficial thinking, the Christian doctrine of the Son of God involves the great danger of the possibility of a return to polytheism. Such a return actually took place in Arianism. The Son is distinct from the Father. It is possible so to regard the work of the Son as to represent Him as in a manner opposed to the Father. Even in modern teaching there has existed a tendency in some quarters to represent the Father as the personification of hard, unbending justice and the Son as the personification of mercy. This tendency goes so far that sometimes the Son is made to appear as one who counteracts the work of the Father. But faith must rise above all such distinctions and oppositions and hold that God is one. It can never let slip this final and absolute unity, for here is the very foundation of all trustworthiness in the

universe. If the facts of the life of Christ and all the circumstances of the Christian revelation teach us to think of a distinction of persons in the Godhead, then the only conclusion at which faith can arrive is that "these three are one."

Faith, then, is simply the soul trusting God in all the difficulties of human life and experience. As these difficulties have arisen one after another, and, in every instance, the faithful soul has still trusted God, there has come to light a theology. That theology is simply the reaction of the mind upon the positions which faith has been led to occupy in the course of religious experience. It is the product of the interaction of faith and revelation, taking revelation in the widest sense to include all those religious experiences of the human race which culminated in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. When regarded from the intellectual side, faith is, as we have seen, in every case a unifying principle.

It would not be reasonable to suppose that the work of faith, in its dealing with religious experience, ceased in the early centuries of our era. That work must be always going on. In our time, for example, an enormous mass of fresh material has been presented to the religious consciousness. The scientific view of the world, the labours of historical criticism, the accumulations of students of comparative religion, the investigations of psychology, the criticisms and constructions of philosophy, the social problems of the day, the experiences of Christian workers in their dealing with races, civilizations, and systems of thought never before brought into contact with Christianity—all these enter into our religious experience and present fresh materials and fresh problems. If they are to be successfully

taken up into the continuous religious life of humanity, it must be by a further exercise of that same method of faith by which all previous revelations have been apprehended; for the modern world, like all other ages, presents to the religious consciousness its own peculiar and characteristic revelation. What it conveys to us depends on the quality and sincerity of our receptivity.

We saw that there is a close relation between faith and reason. It is perhaps important to endeavour to clarify our minds somewhat more perfectly as regards this relation. Both faith and reason are unifying principles. Both deal with the problems and oppositions which come to light in the course of experience. When we contrast the two it is perhaps better to substitute the word "intelligence" for "reason." Intelligence, then, is the faculty which, confronted with the difficulties with which it endeavours to deal, seeks to find some causal or logical nexus by which to establish unity in place of diversity, or, as overcoming diversity. Intelligence discovers the causes and relations of things and events in the natural world. The problems with which faith deals are of a different character. They are the fundamental contradictions and oppositions of human life. Intelligence has ever failed utterly in the effort to grapple with these problems: God and His relation to the world and to man, human will, the mysteries of pain and evil. These and such as these enter into man's practical life in a way which is universal and inevitable. Practically, they demand and must receive some solution. And only by an effort of faith has any solution ever been gained. And the principle which guides the mind in all such cases is this: the foundations of life must be trustworthy.

Faith is, in every instance, the application of that principle. Only by this means can we come to terms with the ultimate difficulties of our experience. And the more perfectly this principle is applied, the more complete will our solution be, the more of truth will it contain. Our contention here is that the application of this method to man's religious experience yields, as its final result, the essential elements of Christian theology.

Faith and reason, then, are in essence the same. The difference resides in the mode of application. But how are we to view the philosophical method which has guided us all through our investigation? The truth is we have followed Kant, using what he termed his transcendental method, the argument from a fact to its only possible explanation—in other words, the discovery of presuppositions. Kant applied his method by setting out all conceivable solutions, and throwing out one by one all those which were found to be impossible. That has been the method of all sound philosophizing ever since. But a deeper examination will show that this method is in principle the same as that stated above. Its underlying assumption is the essential trustworthiness of the foundations of experience. And it is interesting to note that the whole process by which the Christian consciousness worked out the fundamental Christian doctrines was nothing more nor less than a practical application of Kant's method. One by one special theories were put forward to account for the facts of the Christian experience, and one by one these theories were rejected as inadequate or excessive. Christian orthodoxy was the residue. The conflict with heresy, carried on through centuries, was an agelong process by which all possible

solutions were sifted, and the untenable ones rejected one after another. Orthodoxy survived as the only possible explanation of the Christian experience.

The same process of sifting all possible theories which the ingenuity of man can devise is still going on. The critical method of philosophy is applied continually by the collective mind to the whole volume of our experience, and, in the apparent confusion of human thought and life, is being shaped the creed which will guide and express the heart of generations yet unborn. But there is no sign that this great process is yielding any fuller or better theology than that which arose out of the experience of the first century. Christ is still Lord of the human soul because He is the supreme revelation of God.

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